

Izzat Ibrahim escapes assassination attempt

BAGHDAD (AFP) — The number two man in Iraq, Izzat Ibrahim, has escaped an assassination attempt in southern Iraq, official INA news agency said Monday. The vice president of the Revolutionary Command Council "was the target of a cowardly assassination attempt in the town of Karbala," the agency said. "His excellency escaped this attempt and no harm came to him," INA said. The Revolutionary Command Council, headed by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, is the country's highest authority. The attack took place Sunday morning as Ibrahim arrived at the mausoleum of Imam Hussein in Karbala, where he was due to take part in a religious ceremony. "At the moment when the vice president was getting out of his car to greet a large crowd that had come to welcome him, two hand grenades were thrown at him," the news agency said. "Several of Ibrahim's bodyguards and several citizens were injured," the agency said.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية - الراي

Arab League urges U.N. to stop Israeli 'soil theft' from Lebanon

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League chief Esmat Abdul Meguid on Monday urged U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan to force Israel to stop the "soil theft" from Lebanon. "I exhort Mr. Annan to undertake contacts with members of the U.N. Security Council to force Israel to stop its aggression on the people of Lebanon, including the theft of fertile soil from Lebanon," Abdul Meguid said. "These Israeli actions are dangerous and constitute a violation of international law," he said in a message to Annan. Abdul Meguid will discuss the issue with Lebanese officials during a three-day visit to Lebanon which starts on Nov. 30, an Arab League spokesman said. Assistant secretary general for Arab affairs, Ahmad Ben Helli, meanwhile, told reporters that Abdul Meguid had received a message from Lebanese Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri concerning the Israeli "soil theft."

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Regent's talks with Sharon touch on final status issues

Mahmoud Abbas expected in Amman today

By Alia A. Toukan

AMMAN — Talks between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and high-ranking Israeli officials yesterday touched on final status issues, with Jordan emphasizing that it be kept abreast of all Palestinian-Israeli discussions on the matter and that its strategic interests figure in any permanent peace deal, officials said.

Speaking to reporters following the meetings with Israeli Foreign and Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon and Minister of Industry and Trade Natan Sharansky, Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who attended the talks, said final status issues figured on the agenda, and that Jordan will maintain its contacts with all parties involved, especially the Palestinians, to coordinate positions.

"We did not enter into any negotiations with the Israelis today, but we have informed everyone, including the U.S., that we have specific interests in the final status negotiations," Tarawneh said.

said, adding that the refugee issue is of utmost importance to the Kingdom.

Jordan has said on numerous occasions that thorny final status issues, which include Jerusalem, water, boundaries, and refugees, directly affect the Kingdom's national interests and security, and that any permanent deal between the Palestinians and Israelis must take the Kingdom's interest into account.

Last year, His Majesty King Hussein roughly laid out Jordan's position on final status issues in a letter to former prime minister Abdul Salam Majali, considered the Kingdom's policy statement on the matter.

Describing yesterday's bilateral meetings as a "very good working session," Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib said Jordan welcomes the commitment of both the Israelis and Palestinians and "their determination to proceed with the implementation of the (Wye River) memo, according to the time-line."

"We see Jordan as a strategic peace partner in the Mid-



HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, shakes hands with Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon at the Royal Court on Monday (Photo by Yusef 'Allen')

dle East," said Sharon in a press conference, adding that he briefed Prince Hassan on Israeli's positions regarding the peace process and the implementation of

the Palestinian-Israeli Wye peace accord, signed Oct. 23.

Sharon said the Palestinians must stick to their side of the bargain to move the

peace process forward. "A condition for the progress of the peace process is to have reciprocity on both sides."

(Continued on page 7)

Jordanian-Israeli talks overshadowed by lagging trade with Palestinians

By Amy Henderson

AMMAN — Progress in Jordanian-Israeli bilateral trade issues eclipsed discussions on the pressing issue of trade with the Palestinian territories during a meeting of senior Jordanian and Israeli officials, but officials yesterday expressed optimism that lagging trade with the Palestinians may soon receive a small boost.

"We have made several decisions to help facilitate trade [between] Jordan and the Palestinians," said Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdul Ilah Khatib, following a meeting between His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and an Israeli delegation led by Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky.

Khatib did not elaborate. However, an official speaking on the condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times that the Israelis had agreed to several requests made by Jordan

during a meeting of Jordanian, Palestinian and Israeli trade ministers with U.S. Secretary of Commerce in Jerusalem on Nov. 15.

The official said that Israel had agreed to abolish the import license requirement for Palestinian importers, the bureaucracy of which Jordan maintained made it difficult to plan production at Jordanian factories.

The official also said Israel agreed to extend the working hours of the King Hussein Bridge by two hours in response to Jordanian complaints that working hours at the decades-old bridge — the only one now linking Jordan with the West Bank and used by both passengers and transport vehicles — was an extra export hindrance already compounded by the congestion at the bridge. Jordan would ultimately like to see two additional, but dysfunctional bridges linking the Kingdom to the territories reopened.

Finally, the official said, Israel agreed on the expansion of the A1/A2 list and quota of goods that the Palestinians are allowed to import from Jordan and Egypt. Now, the expansion must gain approval from the Palestinians. Jordan says that the lists — part of the Paris Economic Protocol between the Palestinians and Israel — discriminate against her goods.

However, some of the stickiest trade impediments — standards and procedures testing, transport arrangements and Israeli security checks — remain outstanding. An Israeli official speaking on the sidelines of a press conference said that Israel does not recognize any of these issues as "impediments." Jordan and Israel in principle agreed yesterday to form a trilateral committee along with the Palestinians to "follow up" and discuss Jordan's concerns.

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq steps up attacks on Butler

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq accused U.N. arms chief Richard Butler on Monday of trying to wipe out more than seven years of disarmament work, as the Security Council prepared to tackle a row over weapons documents.

"We have hopes, high hopes," that the council will back-up Iraq's argument that the files demanded by Butler are either irrelevant, non-existent or on issues already settled, said a senior Iraqi official.

But Riyadh Al Qaysi, under-secretary at the foreign ministry, declined to indicate Iraq's reaction if the world body backed up Butler's position.

In New York, Britain's ambassador said he thought the council would be "very concerned" about Iraq's refusal to hand over key documents only a week after promising full and unconditional compliance.

The council was seeking "full compliance from Iraq," which agreed on Nov. 14 to resume full cooperation with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) for disarmament that Butler heads, said Sir Jeremy Greenstock.

(Continued on page 7)

Protesters attack Palestinian leaders in Gaza over failed prisoner release

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Protesters tried to break into the residence of deputy PLO leader Mahmoud Abbas on Monday during angry demonstrations over the Palestinian National Authority's failure to gain the release of political prisoners held by Israel.

"If the Wye River agreement cannot obtain the release of our heroes it can go to hell," chanted some of the 1,500 marchers protesting the results of the peace accord signed with Israel last month by PNA chief Yasser Arafat.

At one point about a dozen

youths broke away from the protest march and tried to force their way into the garden of the compound here of Abbas, Arafat's top deputy and the main negotiator with Israel.

They were pushed back by Palestinian police guarding the luxury residence and no arrests were reported.

The protesters, led by the families of inmates in Israeli jails, then marched to Arafat's home where they issued an appeal for the prisoner issue to be put at the top of the negotiating agenda with Israel before

breaking up peacefully.

Under the Wye River accord, Israel agreed to transfer 13 per cent more of the West Bank to Palestinian rule and to release 750 of the some 3,000 Palestinians in its jails.

Palestinian leaders claim the agreement applied only to the 2,250 persons being held for their political activities.

But when Israel began implementing the accord last week with the release of a first batch of 250 prisoners, only 100 were political activists and the rest were common criminals.

The Palestinians, and in particular prisoners' families, were incensed at what they said was an Israeli double cross, demanding that all those to be released be political prisoners.

But Israel, backed up by the Wye agreement's U.S. brokers, said it had always made clear it would not free anyone involved in deadly attacks or who belongs to the radical Islamic group Hamas, virtually leaving only common criminals eligible for release.

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Netanyahu visits West Bank settlement

Agencies

ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday paid his first visit to a settlement since signing the accord and reiterated a threat to annex huge chunks of land if the Palestinians carry out any unilateral acts, such as declaring statehood.

Appealing to worried Jewish settlers Monday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu promised settlers in Hermez, a settlement in the West Bank, a larger budget, a swimming pool and computers for

their children.

Netanyahu has come under fire from the powerful settler lobby and hard-liners in his government for signing a peace deal which handed over two per cent of the area to Palestinian control last week.

"We will act to ensure that settlements remain, grow and blossom," Netanyahu told residents of Hermez, a tiny settlement built on a peak which commands a sweeping view of the Palestinian-controlled city of Nablus to the north-west.

New access roads for

Hermez's 50 families will be built on Arab-owned land to be expropriated in the coming months, said defence ministry officials who accompanied Netanyahu on the settlement tour. Israel announced two weeks ago that it would confiscate thousands of acres of Palestinian land for bypass roads for settlers.

Earlier, Netanyahu said that he would not capitulate to Palestinian demands to release so-called security prisoners. Palestinians jailed for militant or political acts against Israel.

In Hermez, settlers held

signs reading "We won't live in a Ghetto," and "We want a normal life for our children." Many said since Friday's pullback they are more afraid to use roads where Palestinian policemen can now patrol.

"I am not sure I will stay if it will be very dangerous. I am afraid for the lives of my children," said Rita Rakovshik, a mother of three, who like many in Hermez, moved to Israel from the former Soviet Union after the collapse of communism.

(Continued on page 7)

'Jordan wins Syrian pledge not to build ditches on Yarmouk'

By Ahmad Khatib

AMMAN — A senior official said on Monday Jordan won a Syrian pledge not to build new ditches along the Yarmouk River feeding the Kingdom to secure the country's full share of water.

Syria has built 25 ditches inside its territory to store the river waters, a move Jordanian officials claim has helped reduce the flow of the river from 470 million cubic metres a year to 270 mcm near the Adasiyeh border area.

Jordan Valley Authority Secretary General Dureid Mahasneh said, speaking to the press at the end of two days of talks on cooperation with senior Syrian water officials, both countries had agreed to start looking for international and Arab aid to fund a long-delayed dam to store Yarmouk River water and to generate power.

The cost of the Wihdah (unity) Dam, initially estimated at JD283 million, was revised to JD211 million after Jordanian consultants reviewed the project's feasibility study.

The project, part of an agreement signed in 1987, has been shelved due to lack of funds, dormant political tension between both countries over their regional roles and Israeli reservations over the dam pending a regional peace settlement.

"This is a Syrian-Jordanian project" and is separate from the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, Mahasneh said responding to a question about

reported Israeli objections to the dam.

Mahasneh said the 1987 agreement also set the number of Syrian ditches on the Yarmouk River at 25.

"And Syrian officials have proof that this number did not increase," he said.

Jordanian officials have been saying that Syria had exceeded the ditches quota.

"Both sides are fully cooperative on the issue [of ditches]," Mahasneh told a joint press conference with Barakat Hadid, Syria's water ministry secretary general.

On Saturday, Water and Energy Minister Hani Mulki said the dam project would be feasible if such construction works stop.

Commenting on recent claims that the quality of the Yarmouk's water coming to Jordan has markedly deteriorated because wastewater was leaking into the river's tributaries in Syria, Mahasneh said there is "no evidence on such pollution."

"There might be some negative indications of the water quality, but, I believe, there is no proof of intentional actions," Mahasneh said.

Fertilisers, fish farms, animal waste or agricultural projects can cause such changes in the water, however, "we cannot exactly define the real source of pollution, nor claim that it was intentional," he added.

The Syrians agreed to set up several water stations to monitor the river's water three times a week before it reaches the Kingdom. They would also submit a weekly report to

Amman on the quality of river water entering Jordan, which has plans to construct a JD50 million wastewater treatment plant near the border.

Earlier Monday, both officials signed a memorandum on the proceedings of their talks, which included plans to prevent any kind of depletion of the Yarmouk basin.

Mahasneh said he hoped that international and Arab donors, such as the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and the Islamic Development Fund, as well as donor countries like Japan, would provide grants and soft loans to back the dam's construction.

He added that the Syrians are ready to help construct the dam through their organisations and have offered a 30 per cent discount on some of the project's tenders.

He said after constructing the dam, which would have a storage capacity of 225 million cubic metres of water, it would have a 11.55 per cent return on investment.

Mahasneh added that the dam would secure water shares for both countries, generate energy and offer other "positive political, economic and social returns."

Last month, the government said the construction of a JD1.65 million diversion wall to utilise 40 mcm of the Yarmouk's overflow per year and regulate a year-round inflow of water to the King Abdullah Canal, would not negate the partnership with Syria regarding the planned dam, which is expected to take three and half years to be built.

(Continued on page 7)

Lawyer likely to press attempted murder charges after Sri Lankan maid breaks silence

By Rana Hussein and Amy Henderson

AMMAN — The lawyer for the Sri Lankan embassy in Amman today expects to file a complaint with the criminal prosecutor, and is likely to seek charges of attempted murder against eight people, all related, for their alleged involvement in the severe abuse of a Sri Lankan domestic helper.

Lawyer Firas Ta'ameh told the Jordan Times that Subramaniam Kanagarani, a

21-year-old Sri Lankan national, broke nearly a week of silence late Sunday evening to give statements to him, the police, and embassy officials concerning the circumstances under which she was admitted to hospital on Nov. 17.

The woman was admitted to Al Bashir Hospital after having been deposited on her "agent's" door step. She had numerous lesions on her body, including her face, many of which were assumed to be months-old infective

burns, bloody and blackened eyes, welts on her stomach and back, and unusual swelling in her hands and feet. She also appeared to be severely underweight, and had been either unwilling or unable to talk when admitted, making it difficult for doctors and embassy officials to precisely identify the nature of her injuries.

Subramaniam was employed by a woman, resident in the Shmeisani district of Amman, off Gardens Street.

Ta'ameh said yesterday that her statement indicated that "everyone living in the house had his or her own way of torturing her."

The lawyer said the woman described being whipped with ropes, burned with scalding water thrown upon her and with cigarettes. However, medical evidence evaluated so far indicates that the woman is malnourished and may have been bound and denied food for long periods of time.

Ta'ameh said that he

believes he does not have a full picture of the woman's ordeal.

"She told me things she didn't tell the police, but I think we do not know all details yet because she is weak and scared and confused," Ta'ameh said. "We are doing our best to continue talking to her and to let her feel safe."

The woman on Saturday indicated to an embassy official that she was afraid to discuss her situation.

A forensic examination was initiated Friday, but patholo-

gists are still waiting for the results on toxicological, gynaecological and neurological tests which will be used to corroborate the woman's story.

"In my opinion, [her condition] justifies a charge of attempted murder, if not grievous physical assault," Ta'ameh said.

Ta'ameh said he was seeking charges against all family members in the household where Supramaniam was employed except for one, a daughter of the employer,

who was apparently out of the country during the duration of the woman's alleged ordeal.

According to the woman's "agent," Hani Kokash, general manager of Kokash Enterprises for Trading Services — who acted as the liaison between the woman and the employer — the daughter had been employed by his agency and assigned to Sri Lanka for six months. She returned to Amman Saturday, according to Kokash.

(Continued on page 7)

Netanyahu praises Switzerland on Holocaust-era restitution

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sought on Monday to lift a shadow hanging over his visit this week to Switzerland, which has been stung by Jewish claims for Holocaust-era restitution.

In a briefing to reporters ahead of the trip the Israeli leader praised the Swiss government and its President Flavio Cotti "for handling [the restitution issue] deftly, with great attention... despite the many difficulties that they faced."

However, he also defended his attendance last week at a Jerusalem ceremony honouring U.S. Senator Alfonse

D'Amato and three other Americans who helped force Swiss banks into a \$1.25 billion settlement.

Swiss government spokesman Achille Casanova said last week that Netanyahu's attendance at the award ceremony in the Israeli parliament "casts a shadow" over the Swiss visit on Nov. 25.

Responding to the criticism, Netanyahu said: "People who received the award received it for taking an issue that was dormant... and [mobilising] international opinion."

He added, however, that governments that responded to the restitution claims,

including Switzerland's, were equally worthy of recognition.

Many Swiss see D'Amato and the other three recipients of the "conscience and courage" award — World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman, New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi and U.S. Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat — as Swiss-bashers.

The pledged payment averted U.S. boycotts of Swiss banks, which were accused of hoarding the dormant wealth of Holocaust victims.

Bronfman's reported call for "total war" on Switzerland if it did not agree a settlement

was particularly badly received in Switzerland.

Netanyahu's presence at the ceremony triggered public calls from some senior Swiss politicians not to extend an invitation.

The Israeli prime minister is scheduled to attend a high-tech trade fair in Zurich before travelling to Bern to meet Cotti, Defence Minister Adolf Ogi and Economics Minister Pascal Couchepin.

Netanyahu will also travel to Britain and Spain to hold talks with government leaders focusing on the Middle East peace process, the situation in the Gulf and economic and defence cooperation.



PROTEST FOR PALESTINIANS JAILED IN ISRAEL: Relatives of jailed Palestinians hold up portraits of their family members during a rally Monday calling on Israel to free Palestinian political prisoners held in its jails. Palestinians accused Israel of violating the Wye agreement by releasing criminals instead of political prisoners during the first stage of the Wye accords implemented last Friday (Reuters photo)

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police release Jewish militant

SAFED (AFP) — An ultra-Orthodox Jewish militant suspected of plotting an attack on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was released from jail Monday and placed under house arrest, officials said. Shabtai Bloch, a local leader of the ultra-nationalist Lubavich religious sect, was arrested in Safed on Thursday, a day Netanyahu was to visit the northern town. Police accused Bloch of planning to attack Netanyahu during a campaign meeting for local elections. Bloch had organised a demonstration to protest Netanyahu's decision to transfer more of the West Bank to Palestinian rule under the Wye River peace accord signed last month in Washington.

Calls to proscribe ultra-Orthodox group

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A fresh arson attack on the west Jerusalem home of a secular Israeli Jew prompted calls Sunday for the government to compensate the victims of militant ultra-Orthodox groups in the same way as those of militant Palestinian groups. Witnesses said arsonists torched the flat of Carmi Ben Zvi overnight near the ultra-Orthodox district of Mea Shearim. The youngster had received threats accusing him of not observing Jewish religious rules and the slogan "Mischants" was daubed on the charred remains of his home. The attack followed the ransacking of the home of three Christian women in the same district 10 days earlier. Police said the attacks are the work of a militant ultra-Orthodox group called the "Guardians of Decency" and have arrested two members of the group in connection with the earlier attack. A secular member of Jerusalem City Council, Ornan Yekutieli, called on Sunday for the group to be listed as a terrorist organisation and for its victims to receive state compensation.

'Former Iraqi official in New Zealand'

WELLINGTON (AFP) — A former aide to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday is hiding in New Zealand, a report said Monday. Newsweek reported Muhib Muni had fled from Iraq to New Zealand in one of a series of defections from Uday's office. Foreign affairs officials in New Zealand said Monday they did not know whether Muni was in the country. But the United Nations High Commission for Refugees New Zealand representative Hans ten Feld said that if Muni had taken refuge here, it would be unwise to identify him. "If he's here it would be safer not to make that public. Why attract unnecessary attention?" he said.

U.S. building largest depot in Qatar

DOHA (AFP) — The United States is building its largest military pre-positioning base in the world in Qatar, the Gulf Times said Monday, citing the U.S. ambassador to the Gulf emirate. Patrick Theros said the base, which is scheduled for completion in 18 months, will house military equipment rather than soldiers. "It will be like a big warehouse," he said, without elaborating. The United States signed a defence pact with Qatar following the Gulf war in 1991. In 1995, Qatar authorised the United States to stock some equipment on its territory for the U.S. military. In March, it allowed US P-3 Orion surveillance planes to be based there. During the latest Iraqi crisis, when U.S. and British military strikes were narrowly averted by Iraq's decision to resume cooperation with U.N. arms inspectors, Qatar's press slammed the U.S. military presence in the Gulf.

Iran hails 'positive climate' for better ties with Egypt

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi Monday welcomed the "very positive climate" allowing for better relations with Egypt but said Cairo should distance itself further from Israel.

The minister told the English-language Iran News that the two countries are currently cooperating well on cultural and economic issues, and relations would be further improved if Egypt distances itself more from Israel, a country toward which Iran is extremely hostile.

"We have said the more Egypt distances itself from Israel, the more eager we will be to normalise relations with Cairo," he said, adding that Egypt seems to have taken considerable steps in this direction in the past year.

Kharazi did not give a date when ambassadors might be exchanged.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa had said in

October that the two countries had not discussed the exchange of ambassadors despite improving relations.

Both countries currently maintain interests sections with each other, and have recently increased exchanges of cultural and economic delegations. "In the United Nations in particular, there is close cooperation between Iran and Egypt," Kharazi told the paper.

Iran's relations with Egypt have improved since the election in May 1997 of the moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami as president who has pledged to pursue a policy of détente with the outside world and Arab countries in particular.

The countries all but severed relations after the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, because of Egypt's peace treaty with Israel and the warm welcome it extended to the deposed Shah of Iran.

Israeli police prepare for messianic Christian suicides in Jerusalem

Missing U.S. cult members arrive in Israel

Agencies

ISRAELI POLICE are preparing for the possibility that messianic Christians will try to commit suicide on the Temple Mount as the millennium approaches, the Jerusalem police commander said Monday.

The government has allotted \$12 million to upgrade security at the Temple Mount amid concerns that Jewish or Christian extremists might attack the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques at the site. The additional money would pay for the deployment of some 400 policemen and security devices such as closed circuit cameras and sensor pads, Israel Radio said.

Al Aqsa Mosque is the third

holiest site in the Islamic World. In biblical times, the first and second Jewish temples stood there.

Some Christian cults believe that the destruction of the mosques will lead to the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, and this will hasten the end of the world and the second coming of Christ.

Meanwhile, Israeli police said members of an apocalyptic U.S. Christian cult who disappeared after their leader prophesied the destruction of Denver had made their way to Israel.

Police were not unduly concerned by press reports that members of the Denver-based Concerned Christians might try to commit mass suicide at the end of the millennium and the

cult's influence was "marginal," police spokeswoman Linda Menuhin said.

"This cult, how many worshippers do they have? Tens. It's really nothing," Menuhin said.

Menuhin would not say whether sect leader Monte Kim Miller, who has foretold his own death on the streets of Jerusalem sometime during 1999, had himself entered Israel.

A Colorado-based cult monitoring group said last month relatives had been searching for as many as 60 group members who abandoned their homes after Miller prophesied Denver would be ground zero for an apocalyptic disaster in October. Miller, a former marketing manager and Colorado native,

was suspected of leading the group to either Jerusalem or Mexico.

Menuhin said Israeli authorities had several months ago set up a committee to plan for possible public disturbances by cults and messianic groups as the turn of the millennium approached.

The Jerusalem police commander, Yair Yitzhaki, said that "the matter of messianic activity with the approach of the year 2000 is a matter we have been dealing with for a very long time." Asked about suicide attempts by cult members, he said: "We are also preparing for that possibility, which is relatively new, compared with the other threats against the Temple Mount. I very much hope we can cope with it, too."

Iranian officials, newspapers condemn murder of opposition leader

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian officials and newspapers on Monday condemned the murder of an ultra-nationalist opposition leader, saying it was a blow to the image of the Islamic regime.

Daryoush Foruhar, the head of the Iranian Nation's Party (INP) and a former labour minister, and his wife, Parvaneh, were stabbed to death by unknown assailants in their home here on Sunday evening.

Police have launched a manhunt for the killers.

The interior ministry issued a statement expressing regret over the

killings and said it had launched an "extensive" investigation into the case.

Several newspapers also condemned the act.

"Foruhar is being murdered at a time when the country more than ever needs calm and to believe the humane face of Mr. Khatami's government," said the government daily Iran, referring to President Mohammad Khatami.

"The police and the judiciary must do their utmost to clarify the case," it said.

Even the hardline Jomhuri Eslami, which was sharply critical of Foruhar's

views, slammed the "ugly act."

"No matter what motivated it, this is an ugly act and must be condemned," it said. "This act is definitely taken by the enemies of the people with the aim of damaging the image of the Islamic regime."

"It is true that Foruhar was a dissident. But even dissidents have a right to voice their views within the law. And when they break the law, they should be dealt with within the framework of the law," the paper added.

Iran News called the murders an "abhorrent crime," while another English-language daily, the Tehran Times,

accused the Iraq-based armed opposition, People's Mujahadeen, of being responsible for the killings.

Foruhar, in his early 70s, had been an outspoken critic of the regime, accusing it of being undemocratic. He gave regular interviews to the Persian-language services of overseas radios.

A longtime prisoner of the Shah, he served as minister of labour in the interim government of Mehdi Bazargan who became prime minister after the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The transitional government was ousted after eight months and Foruhar has since been campaigning against

the government.

Observers described Foruhar's murder as a severe blow to the secular opposition, which is already under mounting pressure from the regime.

Like other liberal and nationalist movements, the INP is banned but tolerated with activities limited to issuing statements, holding small private gatherings and having its leaders speak to foreign radios.

On Friday, two members of the liberal Islamic Iran's Freedom Movement were arrested in Esfahan, central Iran.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:10 French Cartoon
15:30 Bananas in Pyjamas
16:00 Doc - Life Choices
16:30 Small Talk
17:00 Doc - Mothers of the Wild
18:15 French Programmes
19:00 Les Yeux D'Helen
19:15 French Programme
19:30 News headlines
19:35 Comedy - Step by Step
20:00 What Would You Do?
20:30 Drama - Tom Jones
21:05 You and Your Car
21:30 UN Cut
22:00 News in English
22:30 Lonesome Dove
23:10 Feature film - "Running Delilah"
00:30 End of T.V.

PRAYER TIMES

04:46 Fajr
06:07 (Sunrise) Duha
11:22 Dhuhur
14:13 Asr
16:37 Maghreb
17:58 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swedish, Tel. 5920740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
4632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
4622366
Anglican Church Tel.
4624853/4624811
St. Afton Syrian Orthodox
Church Tel. 4771751
Armenian International Church
Tel. 5865897
German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 5688404
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 5811295
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter
Day Saints Tel. 4654932
St. John the Baptist at De la
Salle College Tel. 5661757
Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 4637440
Greek Orthodox Church Tel.
4646138
Church of Presentation, Swe-
dish Tel. 5920146
The United Catholic Church
Tel. 4624757
The English Language
Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190
Evangelical Free Church Tel.
4892679
The Baptist Church Tel.
4628052
The Armenian Catholic
Church Tel. 4771331
The American Orthodox
Church Tel. 4775261

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

ment of Meteorology
Temperatures are expected to dip slightly but remain higher than average by about three degrees centigrade. Clouds will appear at different altitudes and winds variable to westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Amman 12/23
Aqaba 16/28
Deserts 10/24
Jordan Valley 16/28

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 26, Aqaba 30 Humidity
readings: Amman 26 per cent,
Aqaba 40 per cent.

Following are the temperatures
expected today in the following
areas:

Ajloun 08/18
Jerash 12/24
Um Qays 12/23
Madaba 11/21
Petra 11/25
Dead Sea 16/30

Dr. Awwad Hawasneh 5323350
Dr. Hawing Qubain 4623029
Dr. Ghaleb Zawadeh 4126011

AMMAN:
Firas Pharmacy 5661912
Al Salama Pharmacy 4636730
Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004
Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID:
Dr. Ali Shugairi (02)7100069
Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

ZARQA:
Dr. Akram Haddad (09)85550
Palestine Pharmacy (09)863562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111
Civil Defence Department 5661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777
Fire Brigade 4617101
Blood Bank 4775121
Highway Police 5343402
Traffic Police 4896390
Public Security Dept. 4630321
Hotel Complaints 5605800
Police Complaints 5661176
Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 4787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 0132
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101
Jordan Television 4773111
Radio 4774111
Water Authority 5680100
J. Electricity Authority 5815615
Electric Power Co. 4636381
RJ Flight Information 44-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53300

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199
The Islamic, Abdali 5666131/7
Hussein Medical Centre 5856856
Luzmila 4630195
Khalidi Maternity 4644281/6
Akileh Maternity 4642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362
Malhes, J. Amman 4636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071
Shmeisani Hospital 5607431
Jordan Hospital 5607550
University Hospital 5353444
Al-Moasher Hospital 5667271/9
Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3
Al-Bashir 4775111/26
Army, Marka 4891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital 5157100
Arenal Hospital 5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000
ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323
Zarqa National Hospital (09)80560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)86731
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Roman Catholic Hospital (02)272275
Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)7101372, (02)7103101
Rosary Sisters Hospital (02)7102831, (02)7102011, (02)7103100

AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)2040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:50 Tehran (RJ)
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)
07:25 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
07:30 Damascus (RJ)
09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:05 Muscat, Dubai (RJ)
10:15 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
16:20 Cairo (RJ)
17:30 London, Frankfurt (RJ)
17:30 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
23:10 Beirut (RJ)

Other Flights
12:30 Aden (IY)
14:35 Istanbul (TK)
18:00 Dubai, Damascus (EK)
18:40 Beirut (ME)
18:45 Kiev (GU)
19:05 Paris (AF)
20:25 Tel Aviv (LY)
20:40 Cairo (MS)
22:25 London, Damascus (BA)
23:35 Amsterdam (KL)
23:55 Larnaca (CY)
00:55 Bucharest (RO)
02:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
09:30 Aqaba (arriving at QAIA) (RW)
11:10 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
16:00 Aqaba (arriving at Marka Airport) (RW)
18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA) (RW)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
05:00 Aqaba (add) (RJ)
08:25 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
10:50 Berlin, Brussels (RJ)
11:05 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
12:00 Geneva, Madrid (RJ)
12:10 Paris (RJ)
12:15 London (RJ)
12:30 Cairo (RJ)
19:35 Beirut (RJ)
20:45 Damascus (RJ)
20:50 Jeddah (RJ)
21:00 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)

Other Flights
07:10 Frankfurt (LH)
13:30 Aden (IY)
15:35 Istanbul (TK)
19:00 Dubai (EK)
19:40 Kiev (GU)
20:00 Cairo (MS)
21:10 Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40 Cairo (MS)
00:35 Amsterdam (KL)
01:55 Bucharest (RO)
03:00 Rome (AZ)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights
07:00 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW)
16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport) (RW)
20:50 Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW)

'Health care system should be expanded to cover 250,000 more people'

AMMAN (Petra) — Health Minister Nael Ajlouni on Monday said the current health security system should be expanded to cover at least an additional 250,000 people.

The Health Ministry is currently studying a plan for such a project and will take practical steps towards its implementation, Ajlouni said in a speech at a workshop organised in conjunction with the United States Agency for International Development.

The prevailing economic situation in Jordan does not enable the ministry to introduce a national health insurance plan covering all citizens, Ajlouni said, adding, however, that it can and will develop the present system by covering a greater percentage of the public who have no health insurance coverage.

He said that nearly 250,000 people whose income is less than JD50 a month and who receive financial assistance from the National Aid Fund or the Ministry of Social Development are entitled to free medical services provided directly by government-run hospitals and health centres.

Ajlouni criticised the present system, which he said offers low-cost medical services to citizens who can afford to pay for medical treatment, thus placing a heavy burden on the ministry's resources.

All government employees and their dependants are entitled to medical services at public hospitals and health centres for a nominal cost.

Ajlouni said fees currently paid by beneficiaries of the government's health insurance system barely cover 20 per cent of the actual costs.

The minister added that adjusting the system to require higher fees from people able to pay more could help the ministry improve the quality of public health services. The ministry is studying this matter and exploring ways in which it can cooperate with the private sector to ensure better health services at the lowest possible cost, Ajlouni said.



REGENT RECEIVES ENVOY'S CREDENTIALS: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Monday receives the credentials of the new Turkish ambassador to Jordan, Tuncer Topur, during a ceremony at Raghadan Palace. The ceremony was attended by HRH Prince Ra'd, Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib and Royal Court Secretary General Abdullah Siraj (Photo by Boghos)

Violence against women in Jordan should not be 'taboo' subject — Princess Basma

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma has said Jordanian society must face the issue of violence against women instead of pretending such a problem does not exist in the country.

"This issue should no longer be a taboo. We should not hide our heads in the sand... and pretend it does not exist," she said late on Sunday after attending a ceremony to launch a regional campaign to eliminate violence against women conducted by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

"The shame is to know that violence against women does exist and to allow all forms of suffering to happen against women," added Princess Basma, who is UNIFEM's Goodwill Ambassador.

"The issue should be recognised and solutions need to be discussed, and as long as we do it with dignity and recognise the strengths in our society, the religions and the positive norms, we can make a change and fight it if we work together," added the Princess, an activist working to improve the lot of Jordanian women, who constitute half of the 4.2 million population.

The 16-day campaign, which covers Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, Yemen and the Palestinian self-rule areas, is focusing on all sectors of society, including school-children, in a bid to raise awareness regarding the seriousness of the issue plaguing most societies worldwide.

"I am very heartened that there is a growing understanding that the issue needs to be recognised and the solution needs to be discussed," she told over 150 academics, diplomats, female activists and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Princess Basma expressed hope that current initiatives to address violence against women in Jordan would help come up with a model to serve the region.

Jordan, which set up a family protection unit and is working on creating a women's shelter, is currently revising several laws that are discriminatory against women. His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, have also stepped up efforts to safeguard women and to put an end to crimes of honour, in which women are killed by male relatives on suspicion of being involved in illicit relationships.

Also speaking during the official inauguration of the campaign, UNDP Resident Representative Jorgen Lissner said "society has the right, indeed the duty, to intervene and extend its protection when privacy is used to cover up inhumanity."

"A humane and caring society cannot allow and cannot tolerate the pain and suffering of the most vulnerable members of our family. We cannot allow our women and children to grow up in an environment dominated by violence and pain. They have a right to be protected, to know that their world is safe, that they can go to bed at night without fear for their safety and safety," Lissner said.

The campaign against violence against women is not just important for today's victims, he said, adding that violence is cruel in and by itself and causes untold suffering, both physical and psychological. "We know from countless studies that violence is 'contagious' — that yesterday's victims of violence tend to become tomorrow's perpetrators of violence," Lissner added.

UNIFEM Regional Programme Advisor Haifa Abu Ghazaleh said the campaign will be the basis for formulating a programme for eliminating violence against women and promoting women's human rights on the national and regional levels.

Abu Ghazaleh added that though much had been achieved in terms of safeguarding women's rights across the globe, there was more room for change. "As we approach the 21st century, UNIFEM promises to continue its commitment towards Arab women through working towards change," she said.

Under the theme "A Life Free of Violence: It is our Right," the campaign aims at raising public awareness on the various forms of violence against women, such as domestic violence, crimes of honour, female circumcision and others. The campaign commemorates the 50th anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 5th anniversary of the World Conference on Human Rights with its historical recognition of "Women's Rights are Human Rights."

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At conclusion of regional conference

Participants recommend national strategies to fight domestic violence

By Rana Hussein

AMMAN — Participants at a two-day regional conference on domestic violence agreed that eliminating violence against women and children by using an individual strategy for each country would be more effective than adopting a collective solution to combat this phenomenon.

The participants came up with a list of future "directions" that suggested ways and means of combating domestic violence on the national level of each country.

One of the top priorities of the list was conducting research and studies on domestic violence in order to understand its reasons and consequences.

The most recent study conducted in Jordan on violence against women, released in 1994, indicated that during 1991 and 1992, around 9,000 cases of domestic violence against women were reported to police.

The list also included conducting general awareness campaigns for elderly, children and women's rights organisations, with the aim of changing negative attitudes towards them.

The participants called for modernising civil status laws in most countries in the region

and toughening legislation with regard to perpetrators of domestic violence.

Officials at Jordan's Family Protection Unit, which was established last September, announced recently that the centre deals with dozens of cases of domestic violence each month.

The participants also called for adopting tougher measures against the perpetrators of honour crimes. In Jordan, around 25 women are killed annually in the name of honour, and a total of 17 women have reportedly been killed for the same reasons since the beginning of 1998.

Women and human rights activists in several countries in the Arab World have called on their governments to toughen punishments against those found guilty of honour crimes.

In Jordan for example, convicted murders involved in honour killings receive lenient sentences, ranging from three months to two years, depending on the case's circumstances.

On the educational level, the recommendations called for including human and women's rights articles in school curricula.

One of the future directions called for introducing legislation that forbids husbands from beating their wives.

According to the secretary general of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW), Amal Sabbagh, the meeting, which gathered more than 55 representatives from the region, tackled domestic violence issues in the participants' countries.

"The participants had an opportunity to discuss their countries' experiences, discuss domestic violence cases and tackle the legal aspects pertaining to women and children," she said.

Sabbagh told the Jordan Times that the participants will adopt these future directions in accordance with the situation in their own communities.

"It was an empowering conference, and all the participants took strength from each other," she added.

The participants came from Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Palestine, Yemen, Sudan, Iran, Syria, Libya and Lebanon.

The event was organised by the JNCW in cooperation with five UN agencies: the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Water Authority threatens legal action over illegal water use

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Water Authority Monday warned that it will begin taking legal action next month against citizens who illegally receive water by tampering with or damaging water metres.

A WA statement quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said people obtaining water illegally or linking their homes to the sewage system without permission will be prosecuted.

Citizens who have been illegally receiving water supplies or tampering with the authority's network should cease such acts and comply with the WA's regulations by the end of this month in order to avoid legal action, the

statement said.

Last month, Water Minister Hani Mulki said illegal tampering with water metres causes more than 25 per cent of Jordan's unaccounted water losses.

"Irresponsible and illegal water use must be stopped," Mulki said, adding that the ministry would repair all "broken" metres and pipes at no charge until the end of November.

In its statement, the authority said it will cut off the water supply to the homes and businesses of violators and will not resume service again except through the consent of the minister of water.

The statement said the WA is introducing these measures

to put an end to violations and ensure a sufficient water supply for growing public demand.

Mulki had said that several government studies would be conducted throughout the country to determine the extent of water losses and that more laws would be enacted to stop illegal use.

According to studies cited in recent news reports, in 1995, the Water Authority pumped 50.22 million cubic metres of water to Amman but 28.1 million were lost through illegal acts.

The Water Authority statement said violators will be allowed to pay amounts due for illegal use of water through an instalment system.



TARAWNEH MEETS WITH AUSTRIAN DEFENCE MINISTER: Prime Minister and Defence Minister Fayez Tarawneh on Monday meets with Austrian Federal Defence Minister Werner Fasslabend to discuss bilateral relations. The meeting was also attended by Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Samih Bino. Also Monday, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Abdul Hafez Mira'i Kaabneh, held talks with Fasslabend on issues of common concern. Fasslabend arrived here Sunday on an official visit to Jordan (Petra photo)

Developing world's access to modern communications examined at meeting

AMMAN (J.T.) — A round-table discussion on "Culture and Communication: A Global Information Society" raised the fears of developing countries now facing a high-tech communication onslaught that offers only limited opportunities for poor countries' participation.

"It is unfortunate that ownership [of communications tools] will be the means of advancement in our era, when they should provide a link between nations," said Ibrahim Shahzada, director general of Jordan Radio and Television Corporation, at the opening session of the roundtable, dedicated to future communications perspectives.

"Technological advancements are laying the groundwork for international understanding," Shahzada said, "but they also impose a huge challenge on the Third World." "Technology is expensive. Poor countries are trying to feed people and stand helpless to obtain modern means of communications," he said.

The culture and communications conference is being hosted by the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy in cooperation with the MacBride Roundtable and the Med-Media Jemstone Network under the patronage of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent. During the two-day

gathering, leading communication specialists and prominent journalists from around the world are presenting papers on four themes — Evaluation and Future Perspectives, Democracy and Development, Impact on National Identity and Laws and Ethics. The roundtable is sponsored by Royal Jordanian, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Al Dostour Arabic daily newspaper. The Friedrich Naumann Foundation and Jordan Radio and Television Corporation are also lending their support to the roundtable.

Worries of the developing world are many, said Shahzada, and are fuelled by an inability to purchase equipment, a lack of administrative and professional skills to deal with communications, governments' ignorance of people's rights, and government policies that contradict the reality of modern communication.

"We need an international discussion," said Shahzada, "because we now have chaos. Advertising, for example, can't be controlled."

Cees Hamlink, director of the Centre for Communications and Human Rights in Holland, criticised a \$300 billion per annum global advertising industry, now forming alliances with some of the largest news enterprises in the world, that threatens to blur the

line between legitimate news and promotional material.

"The latest target is children," said Hamlink. "Are our children going to see advertisements in their school text books? I worry that they will. We aren't moving just to the global information society, but to the global billboard society."

Deputising for the Regent, Information Minister Nasser Judeh said Jordan has become a centre of dialogue among religions and cultures and emphasised the importance of information.

"Information is a bridge towards globalisation and communications techniques, and modern information plays a vital role in spreading democracy to all communities," he said.

Judeh stressed the Arab and Muslim responsibility to defend Islam against "Islamophobia" by exploiting the information and communication devices in the Arab World.

Moustapha Massmoudi, director general of the Mass Media Institute of Tunisia, Richard Vincent of the University of Hawaii's Department of Communications and Abdullah Hassanat, executive editor of the Jordan Times, also addressed the morning session.

The roundtable continues today.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police investigate stabbing death

AMMAN (J.T.) — Police are searching for suspects in connection with the stabbing death of a 23-year-old Jabbal Nuzha resident whose body was found in Hashmi Shamali late Sunday night, according to official sources. The victim, Loui Ahmad, was found dead in the Qastal suburb. Coroners said the man was stabbed 29 stab times in the chest and back, with most of the wounds penetrating his lungs, heart and liver. An official source told the Jordan Times on Monday evening that "most probably the murder was committed in a different area." "The authorities found no blood at the murder scene, which means that the perpetrator/s killed the man in a different area and dumped his body in Hashmi Shamali to conceal the crime," the source said.

U.S. senator arrives in Jordan

AMMAN (J.T.) — United States Senator Sam Brownback arrived in Amman yesterday on a two-day visit to Jordan, a U.S. embassy statement said. During his stay, the senator will hold meetings with HRH Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and officials. Brownback is a Republican representing the state of Kansas. He entered the Senate in 1996, replacing Senator Robert Dole. He retained his seat in the Nov. 3 elections. The senator is a member of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

Sudanese minister arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — Sudanese Interior Minister Abdul Rahim Mohammad Hussein arrived Monday in Amman on an official visit. During his one-week stay in Jordan, Hussein will hold talks with Interior Minister Nayef Qadi on bilateral relations.

AMC announces October figures

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Corporation last month exported JD9.25 million worth of vegetables and fruit to Arab and foreign countries. The United Arab Emirates topped the list of importing countries, with 35.2 per cent, followed by Kuwait with 25.4 per cent, Qatar, 11.9 per cent, Bahrain, 11.8 per cent, and Oman, 11.6 per cent.

what's going on

FILMS

* German film "Der Tommacher" (with subtitles in English) at Goethe-Institut, Jabbal Amman on Wednesday Nov. 25 at 7:00 p.m.

* "The Truth About Cats and Dogs" at Books @ Cafe, Jabbal Amman, First Circle at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4650457).

CONCERT

* Arabic music "Al Tahdi Al Shariq" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Weibdeh, on Wednesday Nov. 25 at 8:30 p.m.

PLAY

* "Kind Chemo" (in Arabic) at Hassan Ibn Talal Auditorium, University of Jordan at 7:00 p.m. (daily until Nov. 29).

LECTURE

* "The Development of Laws on Protection of Archaeological Buildings in Jordan" by Dr. Ziad Sa'ad at Goethe-Institut, Jabbal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* The Tenth Anniversary Exhibition of Contemporary

Arab Artists at Darat Al Funun, Jabbal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until Jan. 28

* Paintings by Farouq Hassan at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Uthaina (Tel. 5526932), until Nov. 29.

* Photography exhibition entitled "Windows and Doors" by Hani Hourani at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 18.

* Display of Jordan River Foundation (JRF) 1998 autumn/winter collection entitled "Falling Leaves" at the JRF showroom, Jabbal Amman (Tel. 4613081), until Nov. 30.

* Crossroads of Civilisations: More Than 100 Years of German Archaeological Activities in Jordan (sponsored by the German Protestant Institute in cooperation with Petra Store Preservation) at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Nov. 28.

* Exhibition of watercolours by Mukammal Haghondouh at Instituto Cervantes, Jabbal Amman, until Nov. 24.

* Paintings by Jordanian artist Mohammad Abu Aziz at the French Cultural Centre, Jabbal Amman, until Nov. 28.

Pneumonia raises further doubts over Yeltsin

MOSCOW (AFP) — A wheezing Boris Yeltsin was forced to host his Chinese guests in a hospital Monday in a telltale sign that the Russian president is barely capable of acting out the role of a symbolic figurehead.

Struck down by pneumonia on the eve of a summit with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Yeltsin ended up meeting his visitor but briefly at the Central Clinical Hospital Monday, capping a dismal autumn of cancelled trips and curtailed summits in Moscow.

The Kremlin quickly reverted to the defensive, limiting footage of the president to a few seconds of silent television pictures showing Yeltsin sitting opposite Jiang dressed in slacks and a cardigan and looking pale.

The Russian president has long since abdicated his responsibility for the day-to-day running of the country and its wretched economy, as a succession of heart and lung complaints take their toll. At 67, Yeltsin is already 10 years older than the average age at which Russian men die.

Even his allies have questioned his fitness to govern, while political opponents have charged that he cannot focus for more than a few minutes at a time.

But as speculation mounted in August that he was

about to step down altogether, Yeltsin came back with a new role for himself as Russia's senior statesman who would deal only with key strategic international issues.

Since then however the "protocol president" has fallen prey to bronchitis, nervous exhaustion and now pneumonia. He cut short a visit to Central Asia, and backed out of important trips to Vienna, Kuala Lumpur and New Delhi.

Limited to playing out his role at home, Yeltsin stumbled through a press conference with U.S. President Bill Clinton, skipped a banquet for Japanese Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi and held the briefest of one-on-ones with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder.

Analysts said that these performances and the incipient pneumonia, which is to keep Yeltsin in hospital for 10 days, indicated that the Kremlin chief's last main bastion of authority was in danger of being eroded by the illnesses which are wearing down the man.

"It does of course raise serious doubts over Yeltsin's ability to govern the country," said Yevgeny Volk, an analyst with the Heritage Foundation.

The short periods between successive illnesses show that his immune system is weakened, and in fact



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (right) shakes hands with his smiling Chinese counterpart Jiang Zemin in Central Clinical Hospital. Yeltsin held brief talks with Jiang Monday, one day after the ailing Kremlin leader was admitted with pneumonia and a high temperature (Reuters photo)

any little cold can turn into a serious lung infection," he said.

Andrei Ryabov, political analyst with the Carnegie Endowment think-tank in Moscow, said that the string of illnesses hinted at "a more serious ailment which is being hidden like a state secret."

"Only a very tight circle around the president know what it is," Ryabov said.

Yeltsin's wife Naina admitted earlier this month that the cold Moscow climate was

not helping her husband, who had just returned from a 10-day convalescence on the Black Sea from what the Kremlin termed asthma.

Volk said that given the president's long history of bouncing back from illness and political adversity, he could yet struggle through his presidential term to retire in 2000, "though he'll never get back to being as strong and healthy as he was before."

But the prospects of Yeltsin resigning due to ill-health

remain as remote as ever.

With his opponents in parliament armed with a series of charges gunning for him, the president does not want to lose his immunity from prosecution without some guarantee from his enemies, analysts say.

"Yeltsin does not want to step down because he is not sure of how safe he and his family will be," said Ryabov, mentioning the case of Indonesia's Suharto or Chile's Augusto Pinochet as unappealing precedents for

Yeltsin.

Ironically, Yeltsin's incapacitation has not deterred foreign leaders from flocking to Moscow. After hosting Japanese, German and Chinese leaders all within three weeks, Yeltsin must still entertain Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands next week.

"Leaders want to see personally what state he is in," said Volk. "The West needs constant first hand information on what is going on with Yeltsin."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Police, army attacked in N. Ireland

BELFAST (AFP) — Police and army officers came under mob attack in two Roman Catholic areas of Northern Ireland Sunday and early Monday, a police spokesman said Monday. In Lurgan, southwest of Belfast, police retaliated with plastic bullets on being attacked with petrol bombs by a crowd of more than 50 when called to investigate reports of a suspected bomb. The alert later turned out to be a hoax. And in Crossmaglen, a staunchly pro-unionist Ireland town near the Irish border, a joint police and army patrol was ambushed by a crowd of about 200 by another mob. A police spokesman said the joint security patrol of six was passing a bar when more than 20 men came out and began trying to kick and punch the officers. Some suffered cuts and bruises. The spokesman said the patrol fired two warning shots and was then ambushed from a nearby field.

Far right suffers setback in French by-elections

PARIS (R) — France's far-right National Front has suffered a setback in the first round of three parliamentary by-elections marked by high abstention Sunday, with its candidates failing to qualify for the run-off. In all three constituencies, a member of President Jacques Chirac's Gaullist party will face a member of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin's Socialist Party in next Sunday's run-off for seats in the National Assembly. National Front (FN) votes fell to 15.2 per cent from 19.7 per cent in the previous election last year in the Cote d'Or constituency, and to 10.1 per cent from 13.6 per cent in Eure. In the Riviera capital Nice, the National Front candidate slightly increased his percentage of votes to 25.5 from 22.8 per cent. But due to low voter participation, he failed to win the number of votes needed to qualify for the second round. The FN has been recently by internal bickering over who would lead the state in next June's elections to the European Parliament. FN leader Jean-Marie Le Pen has brushed off a challenge from his deputy Bruno Mégret and said he would lead the party in the poll. Le Pen was last week declared ineligible for public office for a year for assaulting a female Socialist politician. But he has won a temporary reprieve by appealing to the Supreme Court.

Socialist International executive body opens meeting in Geneva

GENEVA (AFP) — The executive body of the Socialist International began a two-day meeting Monday morning to discuss ways of dealing with the global financial crisis. Italian Prime Minister Massimo d'Alema is attending the meeting in the U.N.'s European headquarters in Geneva but German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, French Prime Minister Lionel Jospin and British premier Tony Blair are not taking part. At the centre of debate will be the global financial situation under the theme "making global markets work for all," the U.N. said in a statement published last week. "The discussion will aim to outline the response of social democratic movements in the face of global financial changes," the U.N. said. Particular emphasis will be given to the role of governments and institutions in "securing a sustainable world economy." The meeting will also discuss the situation in Kosovo, the Middle East, central Africa and in Algeria. The Socialist International groups 143 parties in 120 countries and is headed by former French Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy. The council, its executive body, meets twice a year. The last such meeting was held in May in Oslo and the most recent congress took place in New York in 1996.

Wounded aide of murdered Russian deputy talks

MOSCOW (AFP) — The wounded aide of slain Russian deputy Galina Starovoytova was well enough Monday to talk to doctors, who said he was lucid, ITAR-TASS news agency reported. Ruslan Linkov, who was seriously wounded in the Friday night attack in which Starovoytova was killed, regained consciousness Sunday and was talking to doctors Monday morning, the agency said. Investigators hope he will be able to remember something of the assassination, though doctors have warned that he could suffer from amnesia due to the gunshot wounds to the head and neck. Linkov underwent five hours of surgery Sunday. He has been placed under the guard of crack interior ministry forces for fear that the gunmen who killed Starovoytova could attempt to permanently silence him as the only witness to the killing. The murder of Starovoytova, a leading liberal and outspoken opponent of the disastrous 1994-96 war in Chechnya, caused shock in Russia and was condemned by politicians of all shades.

Russian military officers sentenced for hazing

MOSCOW (AP) — Four Russian border guards officers have been sentenced to prison terms from 15 to 23 years for brutal harassment of young conscripts, officials said Monday. The officers, who served with a border guard unit in the Far Eastern region of Chukotka, were convicted of beating and torturing their soldiers, leading to the death of one conscript, border guards officials said, according to the ITAR-TASS news agency. The report did not say when they were sentenced. The investigation revealed that the officers were regularly beating their men for minor offences, leaving them without warm clothes in temperatures up to -20 degrees C and denying them food, the report said. Russia's cash-strapped and demoralised armed forces have been plagued by the ritual hazing of young conscripts by older soldiers and officers, contributing to frequent shootings and suicides. According to official figures, 50 soldiers were killed by fellow servicemen last year, and about 500 committed suicide.

Jagers deny newspaper reports of marriage rift

LONDON (R) — British newspapers said Monday that the marriage of Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger and Tinseltown model Jerry Hall appeared to be in difficulty, despite denials from the couple. The Sun newspaper said Jagger, 54, had walked out on Hall, 42, and was staying in France where he had seen 31-year-old model Carla Bruni, whom the singer has known for six years. The Jagers were reported earlier this month to have disagreed over whether their 14-year-old daughter, Elizabeth, should follow her mother out on the fashion catwalk at the expense of her schoolwork. "This row isn't about that," a friend of the couple told The Sun, which said the Jagers were to meet next week for "crisis talks." "They are finding it very difficult to live together and it looks unlikely they will get back together this time," the friend went on. "For the sake of the children they will try and keep the negotiations civil." But the Daily Mail quoted the Jagers as saying: "We will work it out. There have been rows before and the relationship was far from over. Jagger himself had told friends that reports he had reconciled his affair with Bruni were "absolute drivel". A spokesman for Jagger was quoted as saying: "All this talk of Mick and Jerry divorcing is ridiculous and it's been blown up out of nothing. Mick is in France and Jerry is in New York and they'll be back together soon." There was no immediate comment from The Rolling Stones' London publicists Monday.

Habibie wants calm, more bodies found

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's beleaguered President B.J. Habibie Monday called for calm as more bodies were found from violent ethnic and religious clashes in Jakarta's Chinatown at the weekend.

Police said they had discovered seven more bodies, one less than an earlier police report, bringing to 13 the number killed in Sunday's clashes which followed a week of student-led protests earlier in the month when 15 are known to have died.

Habibie joined calls by opposition leaders for people to exercise self-restraint and pledged to block any undemocratic attempts to force change. "We should be able to control ourselves. We should realise that we are not under a secular government nor that we follow certain religion," Habibie said.

Opposition and religious leaders have warned that the violence was organised.

Several buildings were torched and looted in Jakarta Sunday, most of them in the bustling Chinatown district, during clashes between Javanese Muslims and Roman Catholics from the eastern island of Ambon.

Residents say that Ambonese-led gangs, with the backing of elements within the military, have long run protection rackets in the district, which is dominated by ethnic Chinese.

Ethnic Chinese are Indonesia's most economically powerful minority and common targets of racial attacks.

The latest bodies to be found, six of them charred corpses, were discovered in a ruined gambling den used by the Ambonese community.

Several schools were closed in the area but shops and businesses in the area were open as

usual Monday. The capital's financial markets largely ignored the violence, with the rupiah firming and the main share index up by about 5 per cent in late trading.

Many analysts say the unrest is being instigated by one or more of the country's elite groups, jockeying for power in the vacuum left by the downfall of former President Suharto in May after 32 years of autocratic rule.

The Antara news agency reported Monday that Suharto could be put under house arrest or banned from travelling abroad if he fails to cooperate with a new team assigned to investigate his wealth.

"If Suharto interrupts the investigation process, then the commission will propose a need to impose house arrest or a travel ban abroad," it quoted Attorney-General Muhammad Ghalib as saying.

The recent violence has highlighted the simmering ethnic and religious tensions in this archipelago of 200 million people, kept largely under control during Suharto's iron rule.

The vast group of islands stretches 5,000 km along the equator and is home to 300 ethnic groups and 500 languages and dialects.

About 90 per cent of Indonesians are Muslim, and there are significant groups of Buddhists, Hindus and Christians.

Sunday's violence was the worst in Chinatown since May, when anti-government protests erupted into widespread rioting and looting in the city which killed at least 1,200 people.

Indonesian State Secretary Akbar Tandjung said the government would help to repair buildings damaged in the latest violence.

Albania socialists claim referendum victory; Berisha cries fraud

TIRANA (AFP) — Albania's Socialist government appeared to have won approval in Sunday's vote for a new constitution, the first since the 1990 collapse of the former Communist regime.

First unofficial results reported Monday showed that more than 50 per cent of Albanians who cast ballots in the referendum voted "yes," said presidential spokesman Prec Zogaj.

But the results were immediately dismissed by former president and Democratic Party opposition leader Sali Berisha, who accused the socialist-led government of electoral fraud and manipulating the outcome.

He called for a mass protest later in the day in Tirana's main square, saying the "political mafia of the regime was poised to deliver a monstrous manipulation of the referendum results."

Zogaj, Albanian president

Redxep Meidani's advisor, said: "According to latest central commission counts, more than 55 per cent of Albanians

voted 'yes' in the referendum." Since "more than 25 per cent of registered Albanians are abroad" and the average absentee level "is between 15 and 20 per cent, it is easy to estimate that just a tiny part of the electorate supported Berisha's call to boycott" the vote, he said.

Berisha said his own party's estimates were that "real turnout" was only about 30 per cent, which showed that the "referendum was rejected by the Albanians."

But his allegations contrasted with the view of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) whose 200 monitors oversaw the vote along with a number of international observers, which Sunday put turnout at nearly 50 per cent.

"The electoral process was held in a calm and normal manner," the OSCE chief in Albania Daan Everts told AFP. Another OSCE official, who asked not to be named, described Berisha as a "lousy loser."

The new constitution was

drawn up with the aid of a panel of experts in constitutional law, linked to the Council of Europe, who said the text was "fully in line with European and international democratic standards."

The constitution defines Albania as a "democratic republic" with a division of executive powers — legislative and judicial — a market-oriented economy and guarantees of religious freedom and the rights of ethnic minorities.

Albania has a large Greek community, estimated by Tirana at 60,000 and at 400,000 by Athens, as well as significant minorities of Macedonians, Serbs and gypsies.

Its 3.5 million inhabitants are 70 per cent Muslim, 20 per cent Orthodox Christians and 10 per cent Roman Catholics.

A constitutional vote in 1994, organised by Berisha and aimed at increasing his presidential powers, was narrowly defeated in an 84.4 per cent turnout.

The new constitution was

Hun Sen holds the purse strings in Cambodia coalition pact

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodia's arch rival coalition partners Monday unveiled a government pact that sees two key ministries shared but leaves Hun Sen firmly in charge of holding the purse strings.

Under the deal between the narrow winner of the July 26 elections and Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the portfolios of defence and interior will be jointly held by Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP) and the Prince's FUNCINPEC party.

However the CPP take the portfolios of foreign affairs, finance, commerce, agriculture, post and telecommunications, planning, hydroelectricity, public works and construction, leaving them clearly in charge of the country's economic affairs.

FUNCINPEC secure the sought-after justice, information and civil aviation ministries, and also the lesser prized ministries of culture and fine art, tourism, religion, rural development, education and sport, public health and women's affairs.

Under the pact, announced

by a smiling Hun Sen following hours of talks with Prince Ranariddh, there is also one deputy prime minister from each party.

"Next Monday the new government can be formed," an upbeat and smiling Hun Sen told reporters. "There are very few remaining issues to be solved between now and then."

Officials said the list of cabinet ministers was scheduled to be announced before Monday. When asked if there were expectations of a fast-moving government following months of political deadlock, Hun Sen said the new pact could be likened to a pregnant elephant.

"When she gives birth she has to run fast," he noted.

The deal comes just over one year after a their last coalition pact collapsed amid brief but bloody fighting and mutual hatred.

Prince Ranariddh and Hun Sen ruled as co-premiers following the United Nations-sponsored polls of 1993, but the deal collapsed in July 1997, after fighting in which Hun Sen gained the upper hand.

Hinting that the rivalry

between the two was far from over, Hun Sen said political pragmatism had led him to work with the opposition.

"We can reject Pol Pot but cannot reject legally elected politicians," he said following the formal signing of the coalition pact.

In a deal agreed last week, Hun Sen becomes prime minister and Prince Ranariddh becomes chairman of the national assembly, or parliamentary speaker.

Former parliamentary chairman and CPP president Chea Sim moves to become chairman of a new senate body, taking with him the post of acting head of state in the absence of the ailing King Norodom Sihanouk, currently in Beijing for medical treatment.

There are no posts in the coalition government for outspoken dissident Sam Rainsy, whose party secured 15 seats in the 122 seat parliament.

Sam Rainsy's self-named party was allied to FUNCINPEC following the July 26 polls, alleging the elections were marred by fraud and intimidation and taking rowdy protests to the streets of the

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Red Cross visits East Timor amid massacre rumours

JAKARTA (AFP) — An International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation was on its way Monday to the Alas region of troubled East Timor amid persistent rumours of a civilian massacre there, the ICRC said.

The trip will mark the second time in a week that an ICRC team has visited the isolated area, where unconfirmed reports say several dozen and possibly hundreds of civilians were massacred during an Indonesian army operation.

During the first visit, which ended last Thursday, the ICRC was unable to prove the atrocity rumours which had started circulating at the end of the previous week, said Toni Pfanner, head of delegation of the ICRC in Jakarta and regional delegate for South East Asia.

The rumours, supported by a letter from Dili Bishop Carlos Felipe Ximenes Belo, caused a suspension in U.N.-held meetings on the future of the former Portuguese colony between Jakarta and Lisbon now under way in New York.

A new meeting has, however, been announced for Tuesday in the presence of the U.N. secretary general's special representative for East Timor, Jamsheed Marker.

The meeting will decide on an eventual resumption of negotiations once the situation in the Alas region, in the south of East Timor, has been clarified.

The Indonesian army announced last week that it had ended an operation launched in the Alas area, some 200 kilometres south of the territory's capital Dili, after an attack on a police post by rebels.

The attack cost the lives of three East Timorese soldiers fighting on the Indonesian side, and the resistance fighters took 13 other government troops prisoner, of whom 11 were soon freed and two kept in captivity.

Pfanner confirmed that the ICRC had offered its services to help secure their release.

He also confirmed that following the attack on the police post more than 140 people, mostly women and children, had taken refuge in a neighbourhood church.

"We reminded the authorities that it was their duty to make sure these people were fed, and they did so," he added, stressing that the previous ICRC mission had seen the group alive and well in the church before it left Alas last Thursday.



President Clinton is given a flower lei as he greets the crowd in Guam. Clinton stopped in the U.S. territory of Guam for a six-hour visit after leaving South Korea and before returning to Washington (Reuters photo)

Clinton tells Pacific islands they are not forgotten

AGANA (AFP) — President Bill Clinton Monday assured the leaders of Pacific states of the U.S. desire to strengthen links with their isolated islands.

The leaders of Palau, the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati and Nauru made special trips to see Clinton, who stopped over in Guam on his return from an official five-day visit to Japan and South Korea.

Clinton also announced greater autonomy for Guam, as it battles with the effects of reduced tourism, caused by the Asian financial crisis.

"I understand the challenges that you are facing in building your economies," Clinton said in a speech after arriving from Seoul at Guam airport on Air Force One.

"I want to encourage all the presidents of the free associated states to continue their efforts to promote growth and perform good governance."

He declared that "the United States will remain a partner in building your economies."

Clinton announced \$150 million in aid to help Palau build new roads and said talks would start soon on a new accord with the Marshall Islands and the Micronesian states.

"For years our nation has enjoyed a close unique and beneficial partnership with the free associated states (of Micronesia)," he told the leaders.

"The compacts of free association have enabled us to work together to preserve peace, to foster economic development across more than one million square miles of the Pacific."

"It is a relationship that the United States takes very seriously," he added.

Clinton highlighted how the United States had given food aid to "residents of the Marshall Islands who were harmed by U.S. nuclear testing during the cold war."

The grant to Palau will be used to build a 84-kilometre road on its largest island Babeldaob.

"In less than three years important provisions of our compact with the Marshall Island in the federated states will expire. It is in our mutual interest to maintain and strengthen our ties into the 21st century."

He said he hoped the renewal of the accord would be finished by next October.

Clinton spent four hours in Guam after a visit to Japan and South Korea to discuss the Asian economic crisis and security concerns over North Korea.

Clinton was welcomed by Guam governor Carl Gutierrez and met with local community representatives as well as the Pacific island leaders.

Clinton promised the people of the American Pacific territory a better deal from Washington, pledging more political autonomy, greater social benefits and the return of

military land.

"We will respond seriously and sensitively if the people of Guam seek a different political status ... I will work to ensure that your voices are heard in Washington that you are treated fairly by the central government," he told a crowd of several thousand here.

"I will make sure children of Guam receive their fair share in the new health insurance programmes," Clinton said, adding that he would double the funds available for children's education and health.

Guam was a former Spanish colony which became a U.S. possession in 1898. It was the scene of bitter battles between Japanese and U.S. troops during World War II. Clinton placed a wreath at a memorial to the tens of thousands of war dead.

The island's population of 150,000 have only limited political rights and the territory's economy is struggling with the effects of the Asian economic crisis, as the governor highlighted in welcoming Clinton.

Gutierrez has called for the lifting of restrictions on Hong Kong post-handover Special Administrative Region passports to boost tourism.

The last visit to Guam by a U.S. president was by Ronald Reagan in 1986.

Netscape, America Online discuss merger

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Netscape Communications and America Online (AOL) said Monday they were "in negotiations" over a stock-for-stock merger deal but that no agreement had been reached.

The two technology firms, which issued statements Monday following a series of media reports, declined to confirm reports that the deal had been reached and was worth some \$4 billion.

"The discussions involve a stock-for-stock, pooling-of-interests transaction in which stockholders of Netscape would receive 0.45 shares of AOL common stock for each share of Netscape common stock," Netscape said in a statement.

"There can be no assurance that an agreement will be reached or a transaction consummated."

AOL also confirmed that it was in discussions with Sun Microsystems on a development and marketing

agreement for Internet commerce and other services.

Netscape, based in California, was to release its financial results for its fiscal year ended Oct. 31 at 2:00 p.m. Pacific time (2200 GMT).

If confirmed, AOL, the top online service company, would buy Netscape's site on the World Wide Web and its software business. It also would work with Sun to boost Netscape's other role as service provider to big companies.

The New York Times said the expected purchase — involving a swap of AOL shares for Netscape stock — would increase the power of AOL and Sun Microsystems against their main rival, software giant Microsoft.

The effect of such a realignment on the ongoing legal battle between Microsoft and the U.S. Justice Department was uncertain.

The government is accus-

ing the Redmond, Washington, company founded by Bill Gates of using its clout in the operating system market to win the battle against Netscape for control of the Internet browser market.

Officials from Netscape, AOL and Sun are cooperating with the government at the Microsoft anti-trust trial.

Founded in 1994, Netscape initially dazzled Silicon Valley with the success of its Navigator browser. Later it lost a sizeable chunk of that market to Microsoft's Internet Explorer.

In 1996, AOL had considered striking a deal with Netscape that would have made Navigator the primary browser for AOL's 14 million subscribers. But Netscape reportedly refused to change its Navigator to meet AOL's needs and declined a partnership.

As a result, AOL decided to go with Microsoft's Internet Explorer as its

"default browser" and made a lesser arrangement with Netscape.

Citing unidentified sources, the Washington Post said Monday that the deal would put AOL and Netscape in an excellent position to attract companies who want to advertise online or do business elec-

tronically.

The deal would require the approval of Netscape shareholders and federal regulators, the Post said.

The news of the deal came as a market research group said the market share of the Microsoft Internet Explorer browser has surpassed that of Netscape Navigator.

'Tuberculosis and AIDS epidemic to sweep Asia'

BANGKOK (AFP) — A deadly combination of tuberculosis (TB) and AIDS already devastating the African continent is about to sweep across Asia, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said Monday.

Asia is already at the centre of a world tuberculosis epidemic now killing two to three million people a year, and the situation is set to get much worse if it is not urgently addressed, officials said.

The crippling economic crisis sweeping the region, which already accounts for two-thirds of TB casualties, will likely boost the epidemic, already out of control due to new drug-resistant TB strains.

"By the year 2000, HIV will account for at least 14 per cent of all TB deaths (in Asia)," said Richard Bumgarner, a senior management officer for the WHO's TB programme.

That figure is bound to get worse, he told reporters at the opening of the Global Congress on Lung Health being held in Bangkok. "Asia must be a top priority if we don't stop TB here in Asia, we will never stop TB globally."

In Asia, where the HIV epidemic arrived less than 10 years ago and is expanding dramatically, only two per cent of TB cases were

attributable to HIV at the start of the decade, according to U.N. estimates.

Pasahorn Akarasevi, a director of the Thai public health ministry's TB programme said the incidence of the disease had increased by two to three per cent annually in Thailand since the early 1990s.

"The HIV epidemic contributes to the TB burden (in Thailand) by 15 to 20 per cent each year," he said. "In the northern regions it contributes up to 30 per cent."

By weakening the immune system, the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), which leads to acquired immune deficiency syndrome or AIDS, has a dramatic impact on the spread of communicable diseases.

"HIV and TB are a deadly pair. HIV has already caused TB to spiral out of control in parts of Africa. This core epidemic will spread out across Asia and will exact a terrible cost," Bumgarner said.

Africa, where HIV has spread widely since the 1970s, already faces a disastrous dual epidemic. In 1997, the U.N.'s AIDS programme estimated that more than five million of the 13 million Africans with HIV would develop TB, and that four million of

them would die early deaths as a result.

WHO epidemiologist Chris Dye said that a report by the U.N. health agency to be released at the conference showed that Asia was already at the centre of a global TB epidemic.

He said six countries — India, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia and the Philippines — are currently responsible for over 50 per cent of the epidemic.

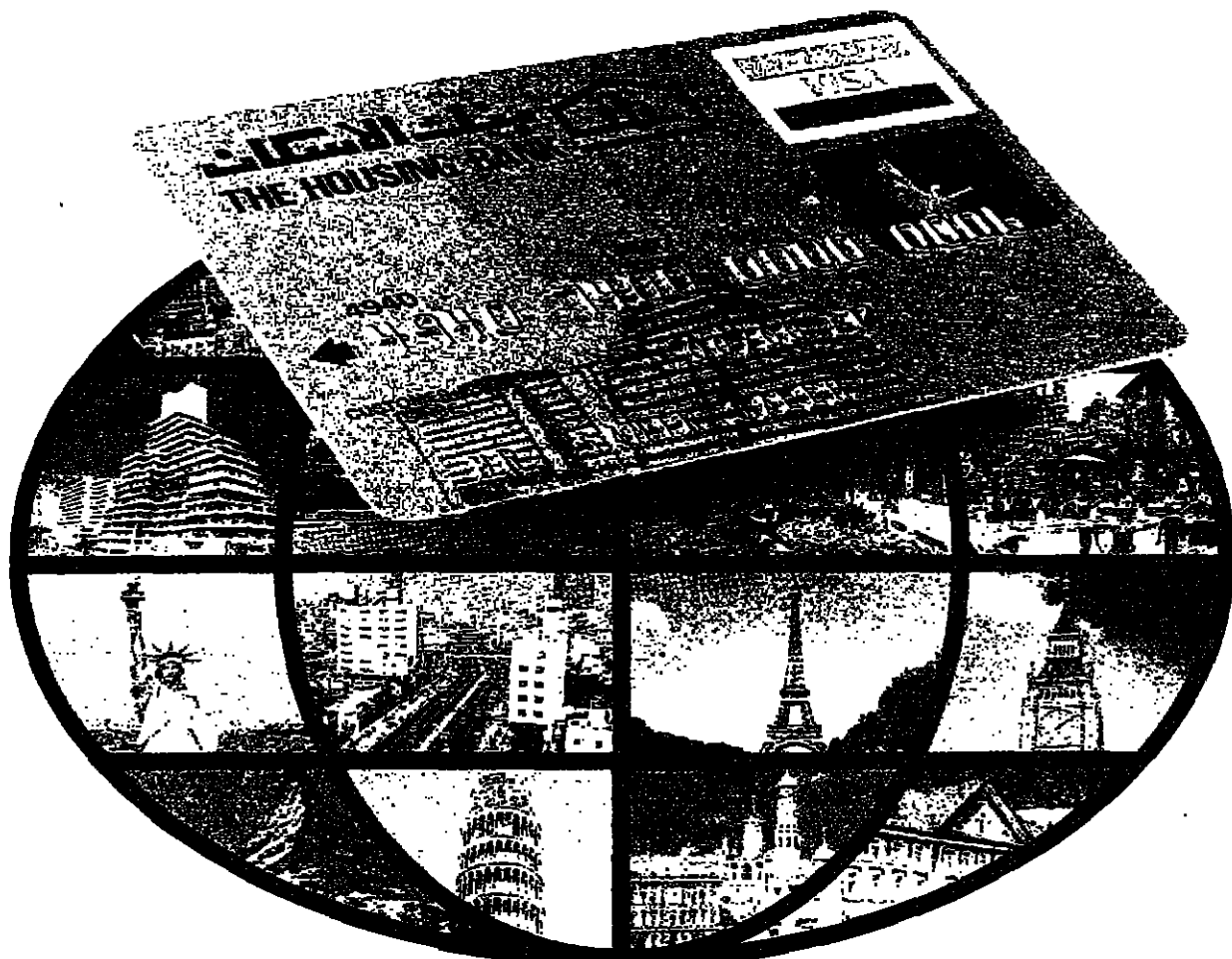
Almost eight million new cases occur world-wide annually, 4.5 million of which are in Asia.

"The number of patients who will die of tuberculosis in this hour is equivalent to the crashing of a Boeing 747 jumbo jet," said Don Enarson, director of scientific activities for the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease, which organised the Bangkok forum.

"The thing is it doesn't have to crash," he said, adding that cheap and effective cures were available, but that political commitment to finance and sustain anti-TB programmes was lacking.

Tuberculosis is a highly infectious respiratory ailment which results in growths forming mainly in the lungs, causing breathing problems and often death.

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Nasty game

BARELY A week after Iraq ended its boycott of UNSCOM a new crisis has erupted. This time, the problem revolves around certain documents on Iraq's old weapons deployment programme during the Iraq-Iran war that UNSCOM wants Baghdad to hand over. The U.N. weapons inspection team wants to get its hands on these documents to verify Iraq's military inventory.

This latest episode seems to lend credence to the argument that no matter what Iraq does to meet UNSCOM conditions new demands will emerge as sure as day follows night. It appears that there is going to be no end to this cycle of standoffs between Iraq and the U.N. The real issue that divides the two parties is, therefore, not Iraq's possession or deployment of mass destruction weapons or the lack of it. The fundamental bone of contention appears to touch on the future of the Iraqi regime.

London is already hosting a conference for the Iraqi opposition. And Washington recently said it will provide the opposition with the necessary funds. It appears then that the two countries are considering new tactics to topple the Iraqi regime before the sanctions are lifted. The last American attempt to do so in 1996 failed miserably when Iraq went after the Kurdish rebels in the north and caught most Iraqis being assembled then by the CIA to topple the regime. This time it seems the game is more dangerous. If the U.S. and Britain is going to unleash the Iraqi opposition against the Baghdad regime then we will only witness more bloodshed and misery in Iraq.

The U.S. and Britain must have realised by now that all efforts to unseat the government in Baghdad have so far failed and could only bring more hardships on innocent Iraqis and more resentment in the Arab World.

The game over Iraq is a dangerous one that might fragment that country and endanger the region's stability. It is time the two Western powers thought of new methods to contain the Baghdad regime without starving the Iraqi people and driving the region to the brink every few months.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Fahed Faneh commented on the involvement of the United States and Britain in the latest Iraq debacle. He said the American administration has an interest in the oil-rich region and it is seeking to control petroleum in the Arab World. The crisis turned into a personal battle between Clinton and Saddam Hussein, said Faneh, who charged that Washington wants to topple Saddam without any regard to the number of Iraqi people who will be killed. Faneh slammed the British Prime Minister Tony Blair for saying that Iraqi compliance with the United Nations is not enough. Next time Iraq will be hit without reference to the Security Council, threatened Blair. Faneh said Britain is seeking to force Iraq to grant contracts to British firms after the sanctions are lifted. The writer lashed out at Britain for its poor record in the Arab region. He said Britain divided the Arab World, issued the Balfour Declaration, according to which Palestine was granted to the Zionists, it also invaded Egypt during Gamal Abdul Nasser rule.

Al Dostour's Jihad Mommani commented on the Lebanese position in the peace process saying that Syria is controlling Beirut's foreign policy in order to make political gains. Mommani's remarks came on the occasion of the independence day of Lebanon with Israel still occupying the southern part of the country. Lebanon is in a state of war with Israel, said Mommani. Israeli warplanes are attacking Lebanon frequently, destroying its infrastructure and killing scores of people, said the writer. Lebanon is a puppet in the hands of Syria, and the Syrian leadership refuses to allow the Lebanese independence to act on the peace track, because, he claimed, it is in Syria's best interest to negotiate with Israel and Lebanon at the same table. He said Lebanon cannot afford daily bombardments by Israel while the Syrians are taking advantage by bargaining on their behalf. What else keeps Lebanon bound to the Syrian line, when it can liberate its southern part easily after Israel's latest offer? asked Mommani.

View from the Fourth Circle

The paradox of four years of Jordan-Israel peace

Rami G. Khouri

IT HAS been several years since any Jordanian official has spoken warmly and enthusiastically in public about the opportunities that peace with Israel has brought the Jordanian and Arab people. Why? How should we react to this fact on the fourth anniversary of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace agreement?

We seem to experience a paradox or contradiction after four years of formal peace: there is rising Jordanian scepticism and frustration about normalisation of relations with Israel, while simultaneously Jordanian-Israeli relations continue to become deeper and mutually meaningful in other ways. These simultaneous and contradictory trends should prompt us all to better understand the attitudes of the other, and to reject the easy option of racist name-calling and anti-Semitic nonsense by both sides.

A rather flexible wait-and-see attitude defined Jordanian public opinion when the peace accord was signed in 1994; now that we have waited and seen — most Jordanians say — we do not particularly like what we see. The Jordanian reaction is worth analysing in greater depth, for it probably accurately reflects general attitudes to Israel in the entire Arab world.

Jordanian attitudes to peace with Israel reflect four strands of perspectives within Jordan (which Israelis and others should appreciate as the first step towards building understanding on a foundation of peace). The first strand is the overall Jordanian national interest, comprising a wide range of economic, political, ecological, demographic, and security issues that concern all Jordanians, regardless of where they came from or where they are heading to. The second Jordanian perspective is defined by those who manifest a novel and rather narrow Transjordanian nationalism; these Jordanians are particularly worried about usurpation of power from indigenous nationals, and that Jordan may be relegated as a permanent dumping ground for Palestinian refugees. The third perspective is that of the several million Jordanians of Palestinian origin; these Jordanians have legitimate and still valid legal and historical claims against the state of Israel, and they fear that their personal and national rights may never be adequately addressed by the current peace process. The fourth dimension in Jordan (which has become more clear in recent years) is the strong pan-Arab element in Jordanian identity; thus, all strands of

Jordanians are increasingly uncomfortable that peace-making with Israel may be taking place at the expense of Jordan's natural place within its wider Arab-Islamic hinterland.

Many reasons explain why all these strands of Jordanian thinking is predominantly sceptical about Israel, reasons that I would group into several broad categories: a) the perceived lack of material peace benefits felt at family level in Jordan (jobs, water, etc.); b) continued Israeli aggression against Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian lands, homes, and economies, in the form of occupation, house demolitions, land expropriation, expansion of settlements, confiscation of residence cards, and other such illegal and demeaning acts (acts by the Israeli state and army, not by lunatic fringe groups); c) a general sense that Israel maintains an arrogant, superior, apartheid-like attitude to Palestinian and Arab rights, demanding that the Arabs guarantee Israel's security before Israel concedes Arab rights; and d) a sense that on the most significant and visible issues of Jerusalem, settlements, water, land, refugees, and sovereignty, not only is nothing meaningful happening, but, even worse, Israel continues to unilaterally change realities for its own self-defined interests — continuously disregarding international law, U.N. resolutions, and the guiding peace-making principles of reciprocity and the non-acquisition of territory by war.

On the other hand, Jordan and Jordanians have clearly enjoyed important benefits from making peace, including: a) Jordan's borders are defined and it is no longer seen by Israel as a substitute homeland for the Palestinians; b) Jordan's borders are peaceful, and routine contacts are taking place in nearly 20 sectors in which bilateral agreements have been smoothly implemented with Israel; c) Jordan has gained important new water resources, major debt write-offs, a tourism boom, unique export opportunities, renewed interest by foreign investors, and substantial new financial aid, probably collectively worth over four billion dollars in total since 1994; d) Jordan mediates diplomatically between Israel and Palestine, thereby enhancing its own national stature and importance.

So why are scepticism and mistrust towards Israel the order of the day among most Jordanians? Because most

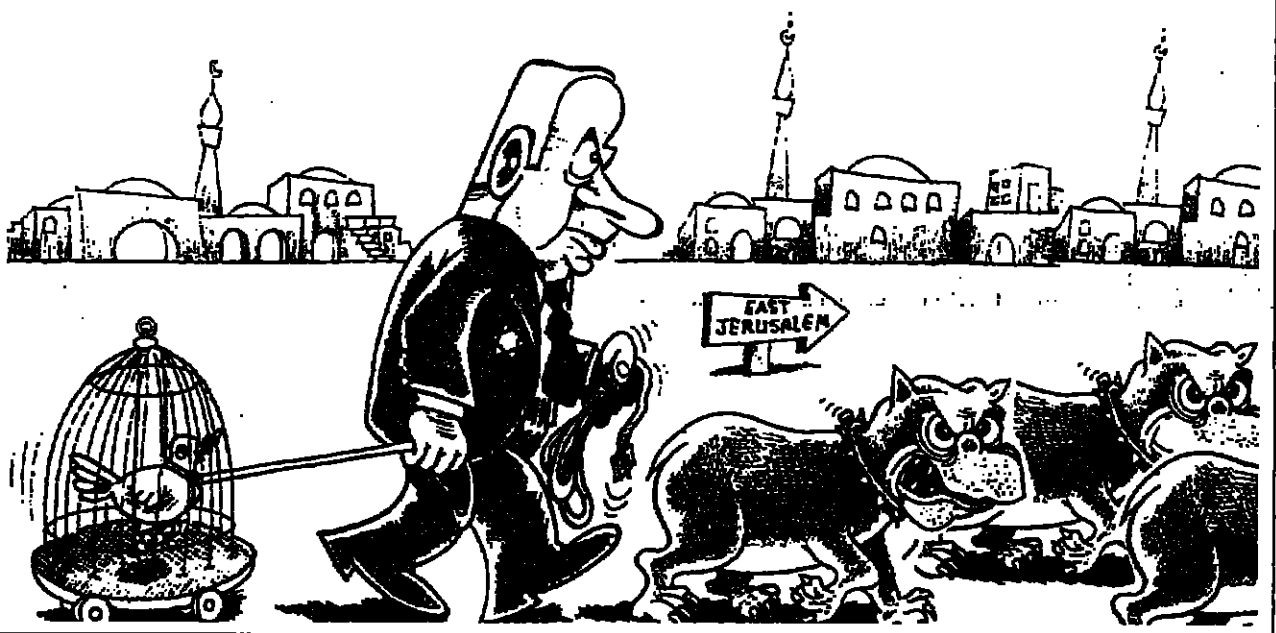
Jordanians perceive this peace to be materially and politically disappointing to them, unjust to Palestinians and other Arabs, and dangerous if it means that Jordan's long-term well-being will require neo-colonial vassalage that makes us reliant on American-Israeli protection and aid. If I were to summarise in a single word this wide range of negative Jordanian attitudes to Israel, four years after peace, I would say it reflects the widespread Arab perception of Israel's continued and even heightened "arrogance" — the feeling that Palestinians, Jordanians and all other Arab must unilaterally and a priori submit to Israeli demands and guarantee Israeli needs, before Israel in turn meets Arab rights and demands.

In the early days of Jewish history as recounted in the Bible's books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, God repeatedly called the Hebrews "a stiff-necked people", meaning they were obstinate, arrogant, stubborn, inflexible, unrighteous, and resistant to God's moral covenant (see, for example, Exodus 32:9 and Deuteronomy 9:6). Today, ironically, Jordanians and other Arabs make an identical criticism of the modern Israeli people, calling them arrogant, haughty, self-indulgent, self-righteous, superior, selfish, and even racist vis-à-vis their behaviour with the Palestinians. God worked according to moral dictates. Contemporary Arab criticisms result directly and solely from how Arabs interpret the words and actions of the Israeli government and people. The parallels are striking, yet sad. They are grounded in realities that must be better appreciated.

The moment demands that we Arabs and Israelis dig deeper into the psyches and world views of the other. The easy course of action is to remain blind to the bad news, and to criticise or ignore the views of the other. The more useful approach would be to work harder to understand why the promise of Jordanian-Israeli peace has resulted in such an odd paradox of substantial quiet, private cooperation and important mutual gains in many respects, alongside a rising and vocal tide of public criticism, disappointment and disdain in many other fields.

The balance sheet of four years of Jordan-Israel peace is not all good or bad, it is both good and bad. The significant new element is that the public expressions of the bad are slowly drowning out the private inclination to engage in the good.

M. KAHIL



Space: The only 'big thing' worth pursuing

By Gwynne Dyer

JOHN GLENN's return to orbit late last month was NASA's best publicity move ever: a 40-year-old space agency sending a 77-year-old senator up to remind us that it is still in business. It was Part One of a three-part spectacular whose purpose is to relaunch the whole notion of the 'High Frontier' (though nobody would be so gauche as to indulge in that kind of phrase-mongering these days).

Glenn always gave good sound-bites, and he did his job like the old trouper he is. (This is the man who remarked during his first orbital trip: "As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind. Every part of this capsule was supplied by the lowest bidder.") He also served as a kind of punctuation: the symbolic end of one phase of space exploration, and the start of the next.

That began with Part Two of the relaunch, the lofting into orbit last Friday of the 20-tonne Russian module Zarya, the cornerstone of the International Space Station. That will be followed in January by NASA's own first component, Unity, a kind of corridor-cum-airlock to which the other parts of the ISS will gradually be connected. And the New Era will begin.

At least, that's the script, though lots of things could go wrong before the space station is completed in 2003. Even Glenn's flight and the Zarya launch had to be timed to sidestep the Leonid meteor shower in the second week of November. There will be 34 more shuttle missions plus nine unmanned rocket launches before all 400 tonnes of the station is assembled — plus at least 1,700 hours of 'space walks' to connect up all the bits.

So somebody is almost bound to get hurt. "It's dangerous. It will always be dangerous. It ought to be expected that people are going to die," said Julie Swain, a member of NASA's independent advisory board. And Eric Christiansen, a NASA analyst, calculates that there is a 42 percent chance that one of the ISS's 32 modules will be penetrated by a meteorite or a piece

of orbital debris during its 20-year lifespan.

To which the people actually taking the risks would say "So what?" There will be an average of seven people on the ISS doing research of various kinds in five pressurised labs (plus various external stations); a total of perhaps a thousand people who work there over 20 years. If one or two of them die building the thing, or in some micrometeorite strike on the module they're working in — well, dozens of others will die in car crashes or falls in the bath over the same period. Being alive is dangerous.

But it is also exciting, especially if you belong to the select minority of people who understand what the space venture is really all about (and will do virtually anything to get the rest of us to support them in it).

They will promise astronomers space-based telescopes that see farther. They will tempt pharmaceutical companies with zero-gravity labs for growing better protein crystals. They console the nervous amongst us with the prospect of an eventual space-based early-warning and defence system against meteor strikes on Earth.

If space-based pornography would persuade us to stump up more cash for their projects, they would gladly do that, too. They have always been quite ruthless about their goal — and they are right.

Konrad Dannenberg, a member of Werner von Braun's pioneering team that developed V-2 rockets for Hitler's Third Reich and then moved to the U.S. to spearhead NASA's space programme, was always clear on the concept. "From the very beginning our long-range dream was space travel, starting with Mars. And Mars was only ever a beginning — true space travel really only starts there."

We are a long way behind the schedule these people once thought possible. Do you remember the enormous wheel of a space station in the first orbital sequence of Stanley Kubrick's '2001: A Space Odyssey'? That seemed a perfectly rea-

sonable prediction for 33 years later when Kubrick's film was shot in 1968. In fact, the ISS is at least two generations smaller and less ambitious than that, and it won't be finished until 2003.

Never mind. It's going up at last, if the Russians can somehow be helped enough to complete their part of the job. And what it's really about is (of course) space flight. Manned space flight, to the Moon, to the planets, and someday, maybe, even beyond.

They don't talk about that much any more, because there are too few politicians who take the long view, and too many media people who find mocking copy the easiest kind to write. So all these engineers and scientists pretend to be hard-headed, practical men and women with narrow minds and tiny souls — but they are not.

NASA has come up with a 'New Millennium' fleet of small, cheap spacecraft, able to operate without much Earth guidance and driven by solar-electric engines ten times more fuel-efficient than the old chemical rockets, in order to meet the demand for scientific investigations of practically every planet, moon, asteroid and comet in the Solar System. It's a brilliant concept that keeps the clients happy — but it's still not what the believers really care about.

The real purpose of all this activity, as they see it, is for the human race to escape from the deep gravity well called Earth that we were born in, and to get out into the universe. It may be a 50-year project, or it may be a thousand-year project, but at this point in our history it's the only big thing worth doing.

Those who know this, know it with a certainty that requires no further argument. With water discovered on our own Moon and the prospect of life on one of Jupiter's moons, Europa, they can see new incentives emerging that might persuade the rest of us to take the long-delayed next step out. But before anybody goes very far from Earth, they will need an orbiting space station to build their spaceships at. And now they're going to get it.

LETTERS

Best wishes

To the editor:

I WOULD like to speak on behalf of all the Jordanians at Purdue University in wishing His Majesty King Hussein a very Happy Birthday. His Majesty embodies the word courage, for even through rigorous chemotherapy treatments he found the time, energy and valiance to make the Wye Plantation talks a success.

This shows that our King is always thinking of his country and his people. Jordan is the great nation that it is today because of the efforts, labour and care of His Majesty. I pray to God that our beloved King will return home safely in order to resume his work in leading Jordan to glory.

Wa'el Sukkar
President
The Organisation of Arab Students
Purdue University
Indiana, USA

A shocking state of affairs

To the editor:

I RECENTLY visited Amman, Jordan, to participate in the 8th international conference of WAMY on the theme "Muslim Youth and Contemporary Challenges." I stayed in Amman for a week, but had the opportunity to meet Jordanian brothers and sisters and enjoy Jordanian hospitality.

I greatly liked your clean, neat and beautiful Amman and its beautiful, loving, hard-working, progressive and sincere people. I eagerly look forward to visit Jordan again.

But certain facts about Jordanian women made me rather sad. I read with grief that the newly-established Family Unit in Amman deals with 60 cases of violence per month, mainly against women. Also, (J.T., 24/10/98) many suicides among women may in fact be "honour" crimes. Just three days ago you reported that a 20-year-old innocent young woman was murdered by her father because he thought that she had lost her virginity, yet she was found to be a virgin. This news-item shocked me because in my country there are no "honour" killings of women in any of the communities including Muslims. (Of course we do have dowry killings where women are murdered by their husbands and parents-in-law for not getting more dowry from their parents houses. We do have strict anti-dowry laws but their implementation is poor. Women's organisations in India are fighting against dowry killings).

Are there honour killings of sons and husbands too who indulge in pre-marital and extra-marital sex?

I fail to understand how honour killings, a barbaric practice, can exist in civilised, Westernised, modern and progressive Jordanian society? Are there no laws to prevent such murders? What are women's groups and human rights groups doing to abolish this practice?

If there are no laws, the Parliament should urgently pass strict laws against honour killings and courts should award strict punishment against such murderers.

Also, girls should be brought up with a spirit to fight against their suppression. This can be achieved only when they are educated and have self-dependent financial status. Furthermore, Muslim men and women should be taught that the Holy Koran clearly teaches that both men and women are equal, and commands Muslims to safeguard the rights of their women. Those who violate women's rights will be punished grievously on the "Day of Judgement."

Dr. M. B. Mistry
Poona-411004
India

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any issue they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld upon request but only under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing and abridging.

Regent congratulate Arafat

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday congratulated Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on the redeployment of Israeli army from the West Bank in accordance with the Wye River Accord.

During a telephone conversation with President Arafat, Prince Hassan stressed Jordan's support for the Palestinians in their drive to regain their legitimate rights on their national soil.

President Arafat expressed gratitude to His Majesty King Hussein and the Crown Prince for their support to the Palestinian people, voicing the Palestinian people's appreciation of the King's efforts at Wye River talks.

President Arafat said that King Hussein spared no effort while recuperating in the

hospital to extend assistance and support to the Palestinians.

Prince Hassan briefed the Palestinian president on talks Jordanian officials held with Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon and Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky.

Prince Hassan also congratulated President Arafat on the inauguration of Gaza airport today, stressing that the opening of the airport constitutes an important step that would help open channels of communication between Palestinians and the world at large.

The Regent said that His Royal Highness Prince Faisal will lead a Jordanian delegation to take part in the inaugural ceremony of Gaza airport, paving the way for operating flights between Amman and Gaza soon.

Protesters attack Palestinian leaders

(Continued from page 1)

The Palestinian official in charge of the prisoner issue, Hisham Abdul Razak, met with a senior official from the Israeli internal security ministry Monday in Tel Aviv but failed to resolve the dispute, officials said.

"We need a summit-level meeting to agree on clear criteria for choosing the prisoners to be released," Abdul Razak told AFP after the meeting, adding that no further encounters on the issue were planned.

He submitted a list of Palestinian prisoners who are held for their political activities but were not involved in violent attacks

on Israelis and said it was up to Israel to release 150 of them.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held firm to his hard line on Monday.

"There is no give on this equation, these are not political prisoners, they are not in [jail] for their political views, they are in there because they committed heinous crimes," he told a group of foreign reporters.

"These people murdered people, blew up people, murdered babies with grenades, and that is something that is intolerable," he said.

"It is intolerable for society, and it's intolerable for peace that murderers

should go free," he said.

Mounting popular anger over the emotional prisoner issue in the Palestinian areas had undermined attempts by Arafat's team to portray the Wye River agreement as an important step in the march towards hoped-for independence.

In addition to the march in Gaza City, a Bethlehem-based prisoner support group issued a furious statement Monday denouncing Abbas and his fellow negotiators Saeb Erekat and Ahmad Qureia as "dealers and gamblers who have climbed down on the most sacred and important issue."

Monday denouncing Abbas and his fellow negotiators Saeb Erekat and Ahmad Qureia as "dealers and gamblers who have climbed down on the most sacred and important issue."

Netanyahu visits West Bank settlement

(Continued from page 1)

Despite Netanyahu's promises to Hermon for another \$600,000 for "various needs," including a new swimming pool, settlers said the premier could not reverse the damage done by the peace accord.

In another development, Jewish settlers seized a West Bank hilltop on Monday as part of their

campaign to gain control over more land ahead of the next Israeli troop pull-back.

In Monday's takeover, settlers of the Elon Moreh settlement drove a bus to a hill east of the community. The bus was used as a mobile home, with a generator providing electricity, said Peter Lerner, spokesman for the Israeli military government in the West Bank.

The government considers the settler outpost illegal because it is outside the boundaries of Elon Moreh, Lerner said. It was not clear whether Israeli troops would order settlers to leave.

Earlier this month, Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon encouraged the settlers, saying they "should move, should run, should grab more hills, expand the territory."

Regent's talks with Sharon touch on final status issues

(Continued from page 1)

"The government of Israel will make every effort...to try to reach an agreement which will be good for us and good for the Palestinians," said Sharon.

Official talks between the Palestinians and Israelis on the permanent agreement began a few days ago in Jerusalem, said Sharon, adding, "and we are going to continue until we find an answer."

Both Khatib and Sharon said yesterday's discussions on final status issues were not in-depth. Officials at the meetings told the Jordan Times the talks are "very general at this point" and that no specific final status issues have been raised so far.

Emphasizing Jordan's interest in any final status outcome, Khatib said the Kingdom needs to be consulted on every detail relevant to its national interests. "This is what we discussed today, and we know that the Palestinian side and the Israeli side recognize the legitimate concerns of Jordan in final status issues, and they are both determined to continue to consult with Jordan and to coordinate very closely with (the country) on these issues."

Jordanian officials said that they have made their interests in any final status outcome very clear to the PNA, Israel and the U.S., and that all sides have shown "understanding" of the Kingdom's concerns. They said Jordan has received assurances from all parties concerned that it would be kept informed of all discussions and every decision made between the Palestinians and Israelis in relation to final status matters.

One official told the Jordan Times that it is accepted by all sides that the Kingdom must approve of any decisions made

between the Palestinians and Israelis in final status discussions affecting the country.

But observers remain unclear on how Jordan will have its interests secured in the final status deal without actually taking part in the bilateral negotiations and without appearing to pose a challenge to the PNA.

An official told the Jordan Times that the "modalities and mechanisms" for Jordan's involvement in final status negotiations have not yet been decided, but that this may come up in discussions with the PLO's deputy leader Mahmoud Abbas, who is expected to hold talks with Crown Prince Hassan and Tarawneh in Amman today.

Asked if the Kingdom believes the "Jordan is Palestine" option has been abandoned by Sharon, who publicly advocated the idea until very recently, Tarawneh said: "The issue of the alternative homeland (for the Palestinians) is not on the agenda at all. The circumstances have now changed completely since the beginning of the peace process, and there is a fundamental change in the Israeli position on this matter."

Sharon, who is holding the final status file in the Israeli government and is in charge of the Jordanian-Israeli portfolio, has few fans in Jordan, but is nevertheless seen by the government as having significant political clout in Israel and of being able to deliver the bilateral goods. Still, at a tense moment during yesterday's press conference, a Jordanian journalist asked Sharon why Israel is refusing to release Palestinian prisoners alleged to have Israeli "blood on their hands," when Israeli officials themselves have the blood of Palestinian refugees massacred in 1982 at the

Sabra and Shatila camps, as well as other Palestinian blood, on their hands.

Sharon, who was Defence Minister during Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, said that "not a single Israeli soldier or official took part in what happened in Sabra and Shatila...everyone knows that what happened (in the camps) was an attack by armed Christian Arabs on armed Muslim Arabs."

Palestinian prisoners, whether Hamas, Fateh, or others, "with blood on their hands" will not be released, added Sharon.

Turkey and Italy continue to trade sharp words over Ocalan

ROME (AFP) — Turkey and Italy traded sharp words Monday as the diplomatic row over the arrest of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan continued to poison relations between the two countries.

Reacting to a spate of moves by Turkey to end economic and trade links with Italy in protest at Rome's failure to extradite Ocalan, Italian Foreign Minister Carlo Scognamiglio said Ankara risked damaging its links with the European Union over the affair.

"It is certain that discrimina-

tory moves based on political theories, unfounded moreover, will not help Turkey to come closer to the European Union as it hopes," Scognamiglio said in a statement released here.

Since Italy said it would not extradite Ocalan to Turkey where he is wanted on charges of treason, Ankara has instituted several bans on trade with Italy and encouraged a series of noisy protests against the Italians.

The latest effort in this area was a decision taken by Turkey's minister for commu-

nications, Ahmet Denizolgun, to end transmission of two Italian television channels RAI-1 and RAI-3 on cable television in Turkey.

Military contracts with Italian firms and invitations to tender for public works have been withdrawn while boycotts of Italian produce have all been instigated in Turkey.

The dispute has deeply damaged relations between the two countries though Italy has lately been calling on Germany to take Ocalan off its hands.

Ocalan was arrested on an

international arrest warrant issued by Bonn but the German authorities say they not intend to file an extradition request yet.

Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini appealed to Bonn Monday stating that Italy "was waiting for Germany to do something" about the Ocalan affair.

Ankara holds Ocalan responsible for more than 30,000 deaths since 1984 during the PKK's armed campaign for independence.

Despite Ankara's repeated demands to Italy for Ocalan's

extradition, the Italian authorities are insisting that he cannot be extradited to Turkey where he could face the death penalty.

Ocalan remained Monday under police surveillance at a secret address in Italy, having been moved at the weekend. A special commission is to consider this week his appeal for political asylum in Italy.

The rebel leader himself has called for help from Europe to pressure Turkey into using his predicament as a way to settle the Kurdish issue through a political settlement.

Jordanian-Israeli talks overshadowed by trade with Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

"It is not ideal, but at least we know now that there is a place, a mechanism by which these things can be considered and discussed in the future," said the Israeli official.

Jordan's trade with the West Bank stood at JD35 million in 1997, of which only JD12.1

million were Jordanian exports to the Palestinian territories. The World Bank has identified Jordan's trade with the West Bank as "crucial" to rejuvenating Jordan's economy, listing in the wake of U.N. economic sanctions on Iraq, once the Kingdom's largest bilateral trading partner.

Sharansky meanwhile said

that Israel "has responded positively to all that Jordan has asked for."

"Today's decisions will help in implementing agreements between Jordan and the Palestinian Authority and Jordan and Israel," Sharansky said.

During the meeting, Minister of Trade & Industry Mohammad Saleh, Hourani and Sharansky signed a joint

letter seeking U.S. approval to increase the number of Qualifying Industrial Zones in Jordan.

According to an Israeli trade ministry official, Israel also agreed to lower its required content input from 11.7 per cent to eight per cent for a five-year period. The source said that Israeli content input for high tech goods will

be reduced to seven per cent.

Jordan and Israel in August agreed that to encourage Jordanian investment at the zone, the Israeli input requirement would be reduced, but failed to agree on the duration of the reduction. Jordan sought a long-term reduction while Israel sought to reduce its input for only a year.

Iraq steps up attacks on Butler

(Continued from page 1)

Qaysi denied his country was blocking access to UNSCOM because, he insisted, it had already handed over tonnes of paperwork, or more than two million documents, according to another Iraqi official.

Opening a channel of dialogue as Washington and London held off on renewing threats of military force if Iraq fell out of line, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan's special envoy returned to Baghdad on Monday.

Prakash Shah, an Indian diplomat whose job is to avoid a breakdown in communication between the United Nations and Iraq, said he would meet top-level officials.

Iraq has offered to show UNSCOM a key document on chemical stockpiles but only in the presence of Shah.

Stepping up Iraq's attacks on Butler, Qaysi accused the UNSCOM chief of wanting to "manipulate the timing... and concept of the comprehensive review, he dictates the timing, he dictates the inputs."

Baghdad has been promised a comprehensive review of the U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 in return for full cooperation with UNSCOM.

Butler asked for 12 weapons documents in one of three letters he sent to Iraq last week.

But Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sabhaf on Sunday said Butler was "asking the impossible" of Baghdad with his demands for more weapons documents.

"We have handed over all, all available documents," he said.

Despite the tension, Butler has played down talk of military action while standing firm on his request for the documents.

And U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said Monday "the full spectrum" of Iraqi cooperation with U.N. arms inspectors would be considered before Washington opted to use force.

Lawyer likely to press attempted murder charges

(Continued from page 1)

Ta'anneh said the victim has alleged that the abuse did not occur until the daughter left the country, and ended only days before her return when another daughter of the employer left the woman on the doorstep of Kokash's home.

According to Kokash, the employer has not completed the woman's working papers nor paid her any wages, although she has been employed in the home since Nov. 1, 1997.

The Sri Lankan embassy yesterday said that no Jordanian official has enquired about the woman's case, but that the embassy had yet to file a complaint with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

"We will wait to see what course the criminal prosecution will take," said an embassy official. "If we do not feel that justice is being sought in accordance with the law, we will pursue this matter through different channels."

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Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Agriculture is a source of income for nearly half of Jordan's population — study

ACCORDING TO a study prepared by the planning and development directorate at the Ministry of Agriculture, the gross domestic product of the farming sector at the end of last year amounted to JD254.2 million at current prices and JD153.4 million at fixed prices.

The sector accounted for 5.5 per cent of the gross domestic product at current prices and 6.1 per cent at fixed prices.

If activities related to agriculture are to be considered, the contribution of the farming sector in the gross domestic product would reach 28 per cent. The study pointed out that farming is an income source to about half of the Kingdom's population and that the total number of Jordanians working in the sector is around 28,000 among 100,000 non-Jordanian labourers.

Estimates of agricultural trade were given as JD538 in exports and JD852 in imports. Exports of foodstuffs were found

by the study to be JD252.3 million which food imports amounted to JD787.5 million. The study calculated the trade deficit in the agricultural sector to be JD314 million and in the food area to be JD535 million. Consequently, the food deficit per capita stood at JD116.

Statistics revealed in the study showed that the area of utilised farmland in Jordan is around 3.8 million dunums of which 1.3 million are planted with fruit trees, 0.5 million planted with vegetables, 1.1 million planted with field crops and the remaining 0.9 million are not planted.

Irrigated farmlands were reported at 770,000 dunums of which 440,000 are in the highlands and badia and the remaining 330,000 dunums in the Ghor (Jordan Valley). The study estimated that 700 cubic metres of water are used in agriculture with the amount representing 70 per cent of the total available water (Al Arab Al Yawm).

Saket represents Jordan at 18th annual meeting of Union of Arab Stock Markets

BASSAM SAKET, chairman of the Jordan Securities Commission (JSC), represented Jordan at the 18th annual meeting of the Union of Arab Stock Exchanges & Commissions which was held in Doha last week. The three-day event, which brought together prominent financial experts from the Arab World, discussed various issues and methods to improve the overall environment of the Arab capital markets and particularly the Arab bourses.

Saket chaired the first plenary session of the union meeting, during which, an open

dialogue with the directors of the Arab bourses took place. The directors reviewed the current situations of their respective bourses and elaborated on prospects to enhance the performance and strengthen the competitiveness of the Arab bourses in the global financial markets. Two seminars were held in parallel to the union meeting. The first focused on the impact of the GAIT agreement on the Arab financial markets and the second discussed the euro and the impact of the global financial crisis on Arab capital markets (J.T.).

Tobacco firm reaches agreement with workers

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — The new management of the Jordan Tobacco and Cigarettes Company Sunday struck a deal with labour union officials promising to meet workers' demands in the troubled company, a unionist said Monday.

"After a three-hour meeting, the management and the union agreed on certain mechanisms to pay workers their saving funds, extra time dues and retirement compensations," said Fathala Emrani, vice president of the General Federation of Trade Union.

The government earlier this year appointed a new management, comprised of the private and the public sectors, to reorganise the financially-troubled company. The company's crisis started after the Arab Bank moved against the 67-year-old tobacco manufacturer for

defaulting on its debts.

"The meeting was very positive, workers showed understanding of the company's situation and promised not to overburden the management with too many demands at once," said Mifleh Aqel, the director of the company, from the Arab Bank.

"The company will pay workers' demands soon after the situation improves," Aqel told the Jordan Times.

Workers who left the company without receiving their rights will be compensated, said Emrani.

Aqel ruled out the possibility of liquidating the company saying that option was "not on our agenda."

"The task of the new management is to put the company on the right track," he emphasised.

Companies attend pre-bid conference to build private independent power plant

By Ghadeer Taber

AMMAN — Eight international companies attended a pre-bid conference Monday to build the first private independent power plant in Jordan to meet a rise in the country's electricity consumption between the years 2002 and 2006.

The government is looking for companies to build a 300-450 Megawatt (MW) power plant, in Samra near Zarqa, on a build, own and operate (BOO) basis at an estimated cost of \$300-\$400 million depending on the size of the plant.

Bidding will close on Jan. 23, 1999.

At the conference, Energy and Water Minister Hani Mulki, with the engineering and technical consultant K and M of Washington, D.C., elaborated on criteria for the bidding, where the cheapest price for electricity will determine the ministry's choice.

The current generation capacity of the National Electricity Power Company (NEPCO) is 971 MW. With the expansion of the Aqaba thermal power station, due to be completed next year, power generation will increase to 1,361 MW.

Jordan can, for a price, also tap into electricity through the regional power grid. The first phase of a five-nation regional power grid linking Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria and Turkey will be inaugurated in

December with the Cairo-Amman line.

Egyptian Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri will attend the link-up ceremony in Jordan, where he will also co-chair with Prime Minister Faysal Tarawneh the 15th session of the Jordanian-Egyptian higher committee.

However, Jordan needs an additional 100 MW every year beginning the year 2002.

Companies will be asked to submit two bids, one for a combined cycle plant based on diesel or gas depending on availability, and the other for a steam cycle plant, which will use heavy fuel oil — a less environment friendly option because of the high sulphur content.

While the level of interest in the project appears quite high and could bring in desperately-needed foreign direct investment, industry sources caution that "what is important is that companies remain interested."

"Asking companies to submit two separate offers is costly for them, and the fuel issue is still a concern for some firms, which prefer a combined cycle plant," said an industry source. "If gas does not become available, such a plant will be less attractive because diesel will have to be used."

Gas could become available depending on a positive outcome of the government's negotiations with an

American-Belgian consortium to build and operate a gas pipeline.

AMOCO, a premiere American oil and gas company and Tractebel, which have already secured Egyptian approval to lay underwater pipelines from Port Said to the Suez Canal and eastwards to Jordanian water near Aqaba, see the new plant as a "potential customer" for natural gas.

Both AMOCO and Tractebel attended the pre-bid conference.

In August, the government qualified 11 companies for the project. Ten firms purchased requests for proposal.

The government's drive to open up the energy sphere came after the sector was restructured with the 1996 electricity law setting NEPCO on a commercial track in preparation of separating its distribution, generation and transmission activities.

Generation and distribution are scheduled to be privatised next year.

Tractebel of Belgium, AMOCO of the U.S., ABB a Swiss-Swedish firm and Snam of Italy in a consortium, CEA of the U.S., Marubani of Japan and Syth of France in a consortium, Ansaldo of Italy, National Power of the U.K., Interger and Bechtel of the U.S., and AES of the U.S., attended the conference.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Looks like you've got a good opportunity, and if you're obedient, you'll most likely be successful. This is not the opposite of strong leadership, by the way. The best leaders are obedient to just about everybody. That's what makes them strong. The people they lead empower them, and today your team thinks you're absolutely awesome.

Taurus: (April 20 to May 20) You may not recognise a good opportunity, if it's in an area that's unfamiliar to you. You may have to learn how to do something different, and that could be a little scary. The pay should be pretty good, however. Just make sure you'll be getting the money before you go to too much effort.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The moon is in Aquarius now, and that looks like a lot of fun. Aquarius is the sign of the scholar. Yours is the sign of the student. With the sun in Sagittarius now, you're most likely going to be interested in studying partnerships or relationships, or one relationship in particular. That certainly ought to be interesting.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 22) You'll be more successful today doing work you've done before. Unfortunately, you may have to do something over that you thought was already done. It's important to do this job right. There could be money hanging in the balance. The closer you come to perfection, of course, the more you'll get.

LEO: (July 23 to August 22) Your mate or partner could come up with an absolutely bizarre idea today. You may think it's ridiculous, but actually just the reverse is true. The idea just hasn't been completely worked out yet. That's why you're in this partnership. Make the necessary corrections and you'll probably be able to fly that thing.

VIRGO: (August 23 to September 22) You may face a technical problem today. Don't freak out if you don't know what to do. You'll figure it out. Besides, you can get support from your partner. It'll be emotional rather than technical, but that's important, too. Meanwhile, don't be upset by a minor problem at home. It'll be easy to deal with once the place clears out a little.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) You're usually attracted to intellectual types, and today you could get an opportunity. You're learning fast, and there's a person who knows more than you do who is especially fascinating. You've always had a tendency to be the teacher's pet, because you ask all the right questions. Make sure you do the homework too, or this won't last.

SCORPIO: (October 24 to November 21) You might feel like you don't have any control over a strange situation at home, and that's a feeling you hate. Try changing your way of looking at it. That could affect the outcome. Don't fight with anyone who has different opinions. Listen instead, and adapt your own philosophy to incorporate the best of the other person's ideas.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You're probably a philosopher, not a scientist, but today would be a good day to study science, or even science fiction, much of which becomes fact. The good stuff, anyway. The bad stuff could come true too, and that's where the philosopher comes in. It's up to you to steer things in the right direction.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Necessity is the mother of invention, and she's going to be active in your life today. She may be bossing you around, telling you to check items off those lists. There's a lot of preparation to be done today, as you hustle and bustle about, watch for ways to make and save money. You could discover some interesting new ones.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You're looking good today. You're creative and bold — just the person you've always wanted to be. Even better, you've got a team that wants to play your way. They're just waiting for you to tell them what to do. Conditions are similar tomorrow, so you can do more research if you'd like. Knowing you, you probably will.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) You're probably getting a little squinty. Rush need to be followed. You need to communicate with people who pull the strings and provide what you want and need. You hate it when this happens. You feel like they're talking down to you, and maybe they are. Don't take them too seriously and they'll be easier to deal with.

Birth Stone of November: Topaz — Tiger's Eye

BMW sees difficult year in 1999

BERLIN (AFP) — The German car maker BMW is expecting 1999 to be a difficult year in the face of an anticipated slowdown in the domestic market, a flattening off of growth in the United States and the uncertainties in the Asian markets, board member Horst Telschick said Monday.

Speaking in interview on the Berlin-based radio station, InfoRadio, Telschick said that a decline in sales in Asia during the current year would be offset by "favourable" developments in other markets. As a result, "we're expecting to see an overall improvement earnings for the year as a whole," he said.

The difficulties at the group's British unit Rover would continue to weigh on BMW's earnings for another three years and Rover would not be able to reach its target of returning to profit in 2000, the board member said.

"We unfortunately will not meet that target at that point," Telschick said. He declined to set a new timescale for the target to be met, but said Rover would return to profit "as quickly as possible."

A.F.M. TRADE Monday, 23-11-98 ACCESS 4646858

Company	Open Price	Close Price	Change
BANKS			
AB	205.000	205.000	0.00%
JNB	1.530	1.540	+0.65%
BOJ	1.070	1.070	0.00%
MEIB	0.970	1.010	+4.12%
IB	1.430	1.430	0.00%
JIB	2.810	2.840	+1.07%
JKB	1.680	1.670	-0.60%
JGB	0.700	0.710	+1.43%
JIB	1.570	1.580	+0.64%
BM	0.870	0.870	0.00%
PIB	0.920	0.910	-1.11%
BANKS INDEX			
	270.840	point =	+0.17%
INSURANCE			
ASI	0.880	0.920	+4.55%
JFI	2.740	2.740	0.00%
INSURANCE INDEX			
	125.690	point =	+0.17%
SERVICES			
JEPKO	1.450	1.500	+3.45%
JNLS	1.050	1.020	-2.86%
JNPS	0.750	0.740	-1.33%
JAKARCO	0.740	0.780	+5.41%
JITC	0.280	0.280	0.00%
AL RAY	5.120	5.200	+1.56%
ALFIE	1.890	1.900	+0.53%
OLDO	0.910	0.910	0.00%
UOLY	1.090	1.100	+0.92%
SERVICES INDEX			
	103.530	point =	+0.83%
INDUSTRY			
ATTANOEPP	1.100	1.100	0.00%
JEPKO	2.910	2.930	+0.69%
JNPS	1.140	1.130	-0.88%
JPRC	10.200	10.180	-0.20%
JICA	1.000	1.000	0.00%
AFMC	2.520	2.510	-0.40%
ITCC	1.140	1.130	-0.88%
DAFAL DAWA	4.980	4.970	-0.20%
MECEE	0.540	0.540	0.00%
JIS	0.880	0.870	-1.14%
JARAL	1.850	1.730	-6.49%
JASP	0.580	0.400	-31.36%
JNPS	0.410	0.410	0.00%
JIPCI	0.300	0.300	0.00%
JUCI	0.990	0.970	-2.01%
JISC	0.350	0.340	-2.86%
JAPCC	1.150	1.170	+1.74%
JRAY	1.050	1.070	+1.90%
JIM	0.800	0.800	0.00%
JIR	0.390	0.390	0.00%
JNCS	0.800	0.800	0.00%
JNAI	0.890	0.890	0.00%
INDUSTRY INDEX			
	72.830	point =	+1.24%

Levi's struggling to regain youth market

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — It wasn't long ago that it was hip to be seen in a pair of Levi's. But not today: especially among 15- to 24-year-olds who instead favour those that are less expensive or more fashionable — with flared legs, dark denim or baggy all over.

That left Levi's scrambling to woo young people to its brand again. On Monday, the San Francisco-based company announced new advertising and marketing programmes that will aggressively target just the youth market.

Levi Strauss and Co.'s roots date back to 1873, when Bavarian immigrant Levi Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis crafted the first pair of blue jeans when they added rivets to work pants. For more than a century, Levi's was considered a mainstay — not just in American fashion but also an important part of U.S. culture.

But times turned tough in recent years as Levi's struggled to hold off increased

demand for rival labels. Levi's sales fell from \$7.1 billion in 1996 to \$6.9 billion last year.

Among the bestsellers: Well-known labels from the Gap and Tommy Hilfiger, newcomers like MUDD, LEI and JNCO and lower-priced jeans from Sears and Wal-Mart.

"The other brands have been able to establish a sense of fashion and fashion excitement and newness even though it's the same old same old," apparel industry consultant Harry Bernard said. "Levi's has not figured out how to differentiate themselves."

A year ago, Levi's said it would lay off 7,400 workers, more than a third of its North American work force, and close 11 of its 27 U.S. plants, to compensate for lower demand in the overall jeans market.

Recently, Levi's said it would halt all production of five-pocket jeans for 60 days beginning Dec. 1. Some 4,000 workers at seven of Levi's 20 U.S.

plants will be affected.

"Jeans remain the single most popular item in young people's wardrobes, but the days of the classic, five-pocket model are over," said Irma Zandi, who runs a youth marketing firm in New York. "Something classic sends the clear message that Levi's is only for older people," she added.

The sinking demand for Levi's is clearly seen in Helen Bulwick's strategic retailing class at the University of California at Berkeley, when she asked how many of her students were wearing Levi's.

"I've got 60 of their core customers in my classroom and not one was wearing a pair of Levi's, and not one even owned a pair," she said.

Levi's acknowledges that it's struggling to recapture the teen and young adult market, and trying to win back young customers. The company has expanded its market research, even going so far as giving cameras to teens to photograph what they wear each day.

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Martina Hingis of Switzerland reacts after beating Lindsay Davenport of the U.S. in the Chase Championships final at Madison Square Garden. Hingis won 7-5, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 (AFP photo)



Lindsay Davenport of the U.S. reacts after losing a set during her match against Martina Hingis of Switzerland at the Chase Championships at Madison Square Garden (AFP photo)

Hingis thwarts Davenport to win Chase

NEW YORK (AFP) — Lindsay Davenport will finish the year as the World's No. 1 player, but it was Switzerland's Martina Hingis who finished on top in their season-ending showdown on Sunday.

Hingis, displaced by Davenport atop the rankings last month, frustrated the error-prone American in posting a 7-5, 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 victory over the top-seed in the best-of-five set final at the season-ending \$2 million Chase Championships.

Hingis, who earned \$500,000 for the victory, avenged a loss to Davenport in the U.S. Open final and ended her own title drought of six months.

She won only five tournaments in 1998, but finished the year as she began it back in January, when she won the Australian Open.

"It feels great," Hingis said. "To play in the Madison Square Garden was a big success for me. I will try to get back the number-one ranking next year."

Hingis took control in the second set, when Davenport was unable to capitalise on five break-point chances. Davenport saved one set point on her serve in the 10th game and had two chances to even the set at five-all.

But after a third deuce, Davenport hit a forehand wide to give Hingis the only break of the set and a commanding two-set lead.

Davenport broke Hingis twice in taking the third set, but Hingis stormed to a 5-1 lead in the fourth. After the American managed to break Hingis in the seventh game, Hingis came back from 0-30 to force match point after

two forehand winners and a forehand error by Davenport.

Davenport saved it with a backhand winner but netted two straight backhands to conclude the two-hour, 23-minute battle.

Hingis went up a break in the third game of the opening set, but Davenport broke back in the next game after the Swiss teenager netted a forehand. Hingis saved three break points in the seventh game before holding serve on a beautiful crosscourt forehand winner.

Davenport fell behind 0-40 in the 12th game before rallying to deuce. But she was plagued by 16 unforced errors in that set, including two straight with her forehand as Hingis got the break and the set.

The 18-year-old Hingis, who will lie second behind

Davenport when the season's final WTA rankings are released Monday, improved to 8-2 at this event as she won her first tournament since the Italian Open in early May. She lost to Steffi Graf in five sets in the 1996 final and fell in the quarter-finals last year.

For Davenport, it was a 'bitter-sweet' ending to a year that saw her win her first Grand Slam title in New York and capture six tournaments overall.

The 22-year-old is the first American-born woman since Chris Evert in 1981 to finish the year at No. 1.

"I tried my best today but it just wasn't enough," Davenport said. "She played great tennis and really deserved to win today."

Sydney Paralympic organisers admit overspending

SYDNEY (AFP) — Sydney Paralympic organisers defended themselves Monday against claims they had spent three times as much on consultants than funds they raised over the past year.

Sydney Paralympic Organising Committee's annual report reveals that A\$1.8 million (\$1.1 million) was spent on fund-raising consultants who raised only A\$623,440 (\$393,000).

SPOC chief executive Lois Appleby said Monday that revenue was not immediately expected to flow from the direct mail fundraising programme.

"You spend a lot more than you make at the start," she said.

However, she admitted they had dropped direct mail as a fund-raiser.

Michael Knight, New South Wales state minister for the 2000 Sydney Olympics and Paralympics, agreed the organisers made a wrong choice in fund-raising.

"They made a mistake; it didn't work out the way they'd hoped. They've learned from that mistake and they're moving forward very successfully in fundraising," he said.

The Paralympics have since signed sponsorship deals worth A\$25 million (\$15.75 million).

ATP Tour World Championships Agassi looking to complete extraordinary comeback

HANOVER (AFP) — Former World No. 1 Andre Agassi is looking to round off his superb fightback from last year's dreadful run with victory in the season ending \$3.5 million ATP Tour World Championships which begins here on Tuesday.

The 28-year-old American, who beat Sweden's Stefan Edberg to take this title in 1990, started the year ranked 122 but has risen to fourth in the world having won five tournaments and appeared in five other ATP finals.

"I'm not interested in the number one ranking right now as much as proving that I can be the best player in the world again," he said.

"I want to win big tournaments, that is the most important thing for me," he added.

British number one Tim Henman meanwhile is looking forward to playing a fuller part than he did last year when he

appeared as a replacement for the injured Sergi Bruguera on the Friday of the tournament and beat Yevgeny Kafelnikov in the final pool match.

Henman's \$100,000 payday for the victory worked out to nearly \$1,500 for each of the 68 minutes he spent on court.

He then flew back to Telford in Britain after his victory to be ready for a semifinal at the British Nationals on the Saturday. Henman, 17th in the world at the time, was the only replacement available for Hanover.

This year, the World No. 9 squeezed in as the penultimate member of the eight man field through his quarter-final win at the Stockholm Open.

"It's going to be a great field there. It's such a good event and I'm really looking forward to competing strongly."

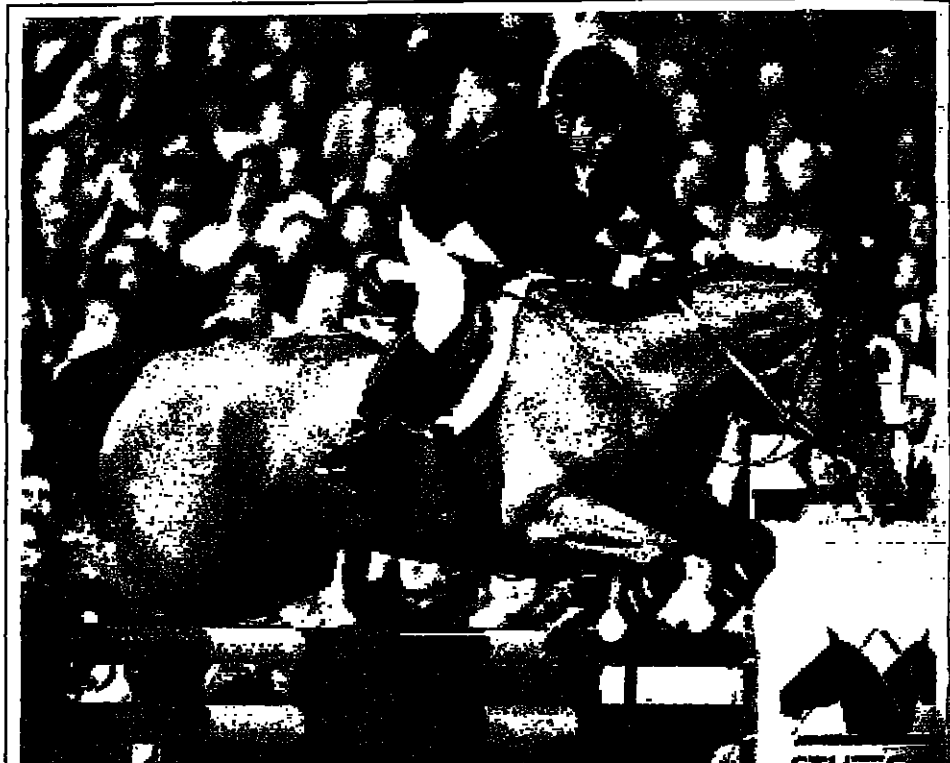
Henman is joined by the big guns of the game,

Pete Sampras, Marcelo Rios and Agassi, along with Spaniards Carlos Moya and Alex Corretja, Slovakia's Karol Kucera and Kafelnikov.

Sampras and Rios will be battling it out for who finishes the year as world number one. Should Sampras prevail, he currently holds a wafer thin 33-points lead over the Chilean, he will set an all-time record of six consecutive years as finishing World No. 1.

Sampras and Rios will head the two groups with the top two from each advancing into Saturday's semi-finals.

Draws for the round-robin groups will be made on Monday afternoon. The final on Sunday is best of five sets with the winner collecting \$700,000 in prize money.



Austrian Hugo Simon on E.T. clears a jump to win the Grand Prix of International Horse Jump tournament in Stuttgart ahead of German Merckx Michaels-Berbaum on Stella (AFP photo)

South Africa gunning for 2006 World Cup

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Minibus taxis career through the crowded roads. Hawkers sell roasted chops and bottles of whisky. Inside the stadium, marijuana smoke wafts upward as security guards with whips oversee the crowd filling more than 50,000 unreserved seats.

The fans at this recent derby between Kaiser Chiefs and Orlando Pirates, South Africa's two most popular soccer teams, sing and sway with African rhythms.

Not your typical World Cup scene. But the day captured many of the pluses and minuses of the rainbow nation's bid to stage the 2006 soccer showpiece.

Sceptics point to the country's high crime, bad transportation system, lack of wealth and disorganised national soccer scene.

But South Africa's soccer mandarins brush aside the practical arguments against holding the World Cup here, in favour of what they say is more important.

It is Africa's turn, and Europe's moral obligation to a nation emerging from decades of racist rule, where the long-oppressed black majority lives for soccer.

The World Cup "provides a vision, a focus, for a society in transition, which is moving from a divided past to a united future," said Danny Jordaan, head of the World Cup bid committee.

Jordaan cites the many African players now playing in Europe, the success of African teams like Cameroon and Nigeria

in recent editions and the "life-giving force" that is soccer to the black population.

The committee's news releases even play the Nelson Mandela card, citing the "international respect of an almost unprecedented level" accorded the freedom-fighting president.

Moreover, Europe has had the cup nine times, Latin America five and the United States once. Africa? Never.

England and Germany are in the race for 2006, with other bids expected from South Africa.

FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter is on record supporting South Africa's bid — provided its facilities are up to par.

"There's this sense in world football that Africa deserves to stage the World Cup one day," said Keir Radedge, executive editor of London-based World Soccer magazine. "That's not necessarily based on any logistical or financial common sense."

It's more based on sentiment. The bid committee cites the country's relatively good telecommunications, road network, sophisticated tourist industry and good weather.

And as South Africa travels further away from the international isolation brought by apartheid, the outside world is arriving. South Africa hosted the 1995 rugby World Cup, 1996 Africa Cup of Nations and 1998 athletics World Cup.

It lost out on the 2004 Olympics to

Athens. But Jordaan said the country's sports establishment decided to focus on the World Cup instead of another Olympic bid because it would benefit eight cities instead of one, and because many of the Olympic sports have no following here.

But despite the sentimental arguments, critics say the problems may be too great for South Africa to hold the biggest, richest and most watched sports event on the globe.

South Africa's cities are among the most dangerous in the world. When the West Indies cricket team balked at coming in a pay dispute this month (November), one of their demands was increased security.

On the plus side, "You don't see (crime) in the stadiums," said Molefi Mika, sports editor of The Sowetan newspaper. "You wouldn't compare what we have seen in competition in Europe."

Despite the lack of European-style hooliganism, South African soccer is not immune to the occasional attack on a referee or riot outside the stadiums.

Public transport is so bad that in many cities most commuters use private minibus taxis, the terror of car drivers and an industry riddled with factional violence.

Stadium security is another issue. Under apartheid, the police ignored soccer — the main sport followed by blacks. So security at stadiums is handled by private groups, which lack the expertise and authority of the riot police who inhabit European stadiums.

ums.

The best stadiums in South Africa are owned by rugby, a complication, but not insurmountable obstacle, to the World Cup bid. Soccer officials in England, South Africa's rival for 2006 along with Germany, have chafed at Jordaan's comments that European stadiums are relics of the 1950s and '60s.

Jordaan acknowledges that transportation is a major problem, but is counting on independent government plans to upgrade the bus and rail system. The bid committee itself has a 60 million rand (\$10.5 million) budget, all from corporate donors.

As for crime, "eight years from now it will be something that belongs to our past," Jordaan said. The problem is, FIFA makes its choice in March of 2000. Formal applications are due by the end of the year.

Jordaan sees hope in the composition of FIFA's board — four members from Africa and four from Asia, compared to Europe's eight. The rest come from the Americas and one from Oceania.

Germany and England could split the European votes, allowing South Africa in the back door, though Radedge says South Africa shouldn't take the Africa votes for granted.

Sampras has slim ATP Tour lead

PARIS (AFP) — ATP rankings released on Monday

1. Pete Sampras (USA)
2. Marcelo Rios (Chi)
3. Patrick Rafter (Aus)
4. Andre Agassi (USA)
5. Carlos Moya (Spa)
6. Alex Corretja (Spa)
7. Karol Kucera (Svk)
8. Richard Krajicek (Ned)
9. Tim Henman (GBr)
10. Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus)
11. Greg Rusedski (GBr)
12. Goran Ivanisevic (Cro)
13. Petr Korda (Cze)
14. Albert Costa (Spa)
15. Mark Philippoussis (Aus)
16. Todd Martin (USA)
17. Thomas Johansson (Swe)
18. Cedric Pioline (Fra)
19. Jan Siemerink (Ned)
20. Felix Mantilla (Spa)
21. Alberto Berasategui (Spa)
22. Thomas Enqvist (Swe)
23. Gustavo Kuerten (Bra)
24. Jonas Bjorkman (Swe)
25. Thomas Muster (Aut)
26. Wayne Ferreira (Rsa)
27. Jason Stoltenberg (Aus)
28. Byron Black (Zim)
29. Michael Chang (USA)
30. Francisco Claver (Spa)

Watch out for the new play

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Drew Barrymore .. in		Morgan Freeman .. in		Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in		CONCORD 'I'		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		ABDOUN www.cns.com.jo/Galleria		
MAD LOVE		KISS THE GIRLS		SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY		FEAR IS IN THE AIR 'TURBULENCE AHEAD'		Antonio Banderas .. in		Comedian Mohammad Huneidi .. in		
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		CONCORD 'II' BODYGUARD		THE MASK OF ZORRO		SAEEDI AT THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY		
						Shows: 3:30, 5:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30		Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30		

Listings for films and showing times as received by cinemas and their advertising agencies.

— His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal, Chairman of the Joint Committee on the Kingdom's Sports, has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. He has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. He has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan.

— HRH Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. He has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. He has just completed his visit to the Kingdom of Jordan.

— The International Media Association has just completed its visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. It has just completed its visit to the Kingdom of Jordan. It has just completed its visit to the Kingdom of Jordan.

— The Sisali tour has just completed its southern tour. It has just completed its southern tour. It has just completed its southern tour.

— The Arab Games have just completed their competition. They have just completed their competition. They have just completed their competition.

— The Jordanian team has just met the Saudi team. They have just met the Saudi team. They have just met the Saudi team.

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LOCAL
SPORTS
SCENE

Prince Hassan congratulates team

AMMAN — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, on Monday congratulated Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Abdul Hafez Miri Kaabneh on the Kingdom's 4th place finish at the World Military Taekwondo Championships which has just concluded in the U.S. The Regent also congratulated Ibrahim Aqil and Mohammad Nawwaf for winning gold and bronze medals. Aqil took first place in the heavyweight category, which included 11 countries, while Nawwaf took 3rd place in the 67kg category, which grouped 10 countries. The national taekwondo team is currently holding a training camp in China in preparation for the Asian Games which will be held in Bangkok Dec. 6-20.

Prince Abdullah supports new project

AMMAN — HRH Prince Abdullah, president of the Pan-Arab Games' Higher Organisational Committee, said the Jordan Football Association (JFA) will adopt a project to organise the federation's relations with soccer clubs after recent controversies disrupted the Premier League and led to its cancellation for the season. The Prince said the plan suggested by the late Nazmi Al Saeed, one of the country's sports pioneers, who passed away two weeks ago, would be presented to the cabinet for approval. Prince Abdullah, the president of the JFA, made the remarks after visiting Al Saeed's home to pay condolences. The Prince expressed sorrow over losing Al Saeed saying "Jordan has lost one of its leading sports leaders." Meanwhile, the Prince said contacts were underway with Turkey to hold a two-week training camp for the national soccer team as part of its preparations for Pan-Arab Games, which will be held in Amman Aug. 15-31, 1999.

International media mourn passing of Al Saeed

AMMAN — Al Ra'i Arabic daily Monday received a letter of condolence from the International Sports Press Association (AIPS) expressing "deep sorrow for the passing away of Nazmi Al Saeed, head of the Jordan Sports Media Association and the sports department at the newspaper since 1975, who died of heart failure on Nov. 13. "Through him we have lost not only a remarkable personality who brought valuable contribution to the AIPS all these years, but a reliable friend," said the letter.

Faisali tour southern Jordan

AMMAN — The Kingdom's 1998 Jordan Cup Champions Al Faisali today start a tour of the south to play four matches against teams in Karak, Maa'n, Tafleeh and Aqaba on the occasion of His Majesty King Hussein's 63rd birthday. This is Al Faisali's second tour after defeating Karak's team 3-0 in a previous match.

Pan-Arab Games to receive more funds

AMMAN — The Arab Ministerial Committee of the 9th Pan-Arab Games has recommended to the Arab Youth and Sport Council the formation of a committee to secure funds for the next summer's Games in Amman. The committee will meet on Feb. 22, 1999.

Jordan meets Saudi in handball today

AMMAN — The National Handball Team on Tuesday will play their opening match against Saudi Arabia's team at the West Asia Handball Qualifiers which start in Dammam today. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan and Bahrain are competing in the four-day event.

Compiled by Ahmad Khatib



Latvia's Chilean player Marcelo Salas (C) is challenged by AC Milan players Alessandro Costacurta (R) and Davide Ambrosini during their Serie A match in Milan (AP photo)



U.S. athlete Marion Jones, left, and Ethiopian athlete Haile Gebrselassie hold their trophies for the 1998 Athlete of the Year during the IAF World Athletics Gala in Monaco (AP photo)

JORDAN TIMES E-MAIL
jtimes@go.com.jo

Monaco
and
Marseille
in historic
Euro
clash

MONACO (R) — Monaco and Olympique Marseille clash on Tuesday in the first all-French match in a major European club competition.

League leaders Marseille, European Cup winners in 1993, and Monaco, semi-finalists in Europe in the last two seasons, meet in the first leg of their UEFA Cup third round tie at the Stade Louis II.

Adding spice to the encounter is the fact that each side contains three of France's World Cup-winning squad.

Fabien Barthez, who won the European Cup with Marseille in 1993, will be in goal for Monaco and young strikers Thierry Henry and David Trezeguet up front.

Marseille have Laurent Blanc at the heart of their defence with Robert Pires, in brilliant form as playmaker, and Christophe Dugarry up front.

Marseille's main injury absence is Italian striker Fabrizio Ravanelli, but Monaco welcome back two long-term injury absentees, Sylvain Legwinski and Martin Djetou, who played a significant part in their championship victory in 1997.

Both sides also come to the game from significant league defeats last Thursday.

Marseille lost for the first time this season, 2-1 away to Olympique Lyon. Monaco's unbeaten home record went when they went down 2-0 to Girondins Bordeaux.

In an evenly balanced league match at the Velodrome 16 days ago, Marseille, down to 10 men for nearly an hour, snatched a 1-0 victory over Monaco in injury time.

Marseille, despite their loss at Lyon, go into the match in better shape than Monaco, who are in crisis after a mediocre injury-plagued start to the season that has left them 13 points behind Olympique. They need to win on Tuesday to salvage their season.

Monaco's Barthez said: "At Marseille there are players of great experience and we mustn't kid ourselves. They're going to quickly recover from their defeat at Lyon. It would be a mistake to think they are there for the taking."

Elway sets record as Broncos
continue to impress

WASHINGTON (AFP) — John Elway became only the second quarterback in National Football League history to pass for more than 50,000 yards Sunday as Denver continued their quest for a perfect season.

The reigning Super Bowl champions used a huge fourth quarter to beat AFC West archrival Oakland 40-14, becoming the 10th NFL team to start the season with 11 wins.

The Broncos clinched a playoff spot, and continued their chase for history in the form of the 1972 Miami Dolphins, who were an unparalleled 17-0 including the postseason.

The Minnesota Vikings almost certainly ended Green Bay's reign as the NFC Central division champions with a 28-14 victory.

They, too, were assured of at least a wildcard berth when New Orleans lost 31-20 in San Francisco.

"They're playing well, they are legit," Green Bay quarterback Brett Favre said of the Vikings. "They should win it (the division). We just have to move on."

The Packers were aiming to avenge their defeat by Minnesota at Lambeau Field earlier this season.

Instead, Randy Moss again terrorised the Packers' secondary with eight catches for 153 yards, including a 49-yard touchdown.

"I told Randall (Cunningham) just throw it up and I'll go get it," said Moss. "I feel I'm playing at the same level each week. Given opportunities to make plays, I have confidence that I can."

At 10-1, the Vikings own the best record in the NFC and opened a commanding three-game lead over Green Bay.

Cunningham went 20-for-30 for 264 yards and two touchdowns with an interception.

"Let's face it Randall was a gift to us," coach Dennis Green said. "He has a great love for the game. He's put up some big numbers this year, but the best number is 10-1."

That's just how Elway felt about 11-0.

With 50,167 career passing yards, he joined Dolphins great Dan Marino as the only quarterback to surpass 50,000. But the milestone was less important than the win.

"We knew we were in for a dogfight today," Elway said. "One minute we're up 17-0 and the next thing you know we're in a football game."

He completed 17-of-25 passes and three touchdowns, including two in the fourth quarter after the Raiders cut the deficit to 17-14 on a 14-yard TD pass from Donald Hollas to James Jett.

The Broncos responded



San Diego Chargers running back Tremayne Stephens (34) dives over the top of the Kansas City Chiefs' defense to score a touchdown on a fourth-and-one play during the second quarter (AP photo)

almost effortlessly and inordinably pulled away.

Jason Elam opened a six-point lead 83 seconds into the final period with a 23-yard field goal. Elway took over from there, finding Rod Smith for a 28-yard score, then hitting fullback Howard Griffith for a three-yard TD. Both scores came after Hollas threw interceptions.

An interception and long return by veteran safety Tyrone Braxton set up Vaughn Hebronn's TD run from the three with 2:23 to play.

Terrell Davis continued his assault on the magical 2,000-yard rushing mark, running for 162 yards and a score on 31 carries. He has a league-leading 1,492 yards with five games remaining and needs to average just over 101 yards per game — well below his current average — to reach the milestone.

Hollas lost as a starter for the first time in five games this season. He completed 20-of-35 passes for 270 yards with two TDs and three interceptions for Oakland, which is one of a quartet of second- or third-place AFC teams with the same record.

With just under 10 minutes to play, it appeared Oakland had a shot after defensive end James Harris fell on Elway's fumble at the Raiders 21. But Denver got back the ball less than a minute later when otherwise quiet defensive end Neil Smith picked off a deflected pass.

In other games, Atlanta beat Chicago 20-13, Buffalo downed Indianapolis 34-11, Dallas beat Seattle 30-22, Pittsburgh pounded Jacksonville 30-15, and the New York Giants blanked the Philadelphia Eagles 20-0 — the third shut-out against the hapless Eagles this season.

Detroit hammered another nail in Tampa Bay's coffin with a 28-25 win, while Arizona kept their playoff hopes alive with a 45-42 win over Washington.

Carolina beat St. Louis 24-20, Baltimore beat Cincinnati 20-13, San Diego beat Kansas City 38-37 and the New York Jets beat Tennessee 24-3.

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THE KILLING LEAD

Both vulnerable. East deals.

NORTH
♠ A 10 5 4
♥ A 3
♦ A J 8 5 4 3
♣ JWEST
♠ 8 7
♥ J 7 2
♦ 10 9 7
♣ K 8 6 5EAST
♠ J 2
♥ K Q 10 9 8 6 5
♦ Void
♣ A 7 3 2SOUTH
♠ K Q 9 8 3
♥ 4
♦ K Q 6 2
♣ Q 10 4

The bidding:

EAST SOUTH WEST NORTH

1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 1♠

2♣ 2♦ 2♥ 2♠

3♣ 3♦ 3♥ 3♠

4♣ 4♦ 4♥ 4♠

5♣ 5♦ 5♥ 5♠

6♣ 6♦ 6♥ 6♠

7♣ 7♦ 7♥ 7♠

Opening lead: Six of ♣.

The Lightning double of a freely-

bid slam asks for an unusual lead.

It suggests that partner can ruff a

suit, usually the one bid by the

dummy, if dummy has not bid a

suit, try declarer's first bid suit for

what if dummy never bid a suit at

all and declarer just one?

When South was able to act

freely over East's three-heart rebid,

North decided there had to be play

for slam. Blackwood elicited the

information that an ace was miss-

ing, and North settled in the small

slam. East doubled.

The one sure thing about the dou-

ble is that it says don't lead the suit

bid by the doubler. That left the

choice between the minor suits, and

neither had been bid. After long

thought West led a club. Since the

defender held longer clubs than dia-

monds, East was more likely to be

void in that suit. East won the ace

of clubs and declarer claimed the

rest of the tricks.

Obviously, a diamond lead would

have defeated the contract, but no

one can possibly blame West for not

finding it. However, West must

shoulder the blame for not defeat-

ing the contract.

Having decided to lead a club,

West should have led the king.

Should East be void in clubs, the

defender will ruff and take whatev-

er other trick is cashable. As the

card lie, however, the king will hold

the trick as East follows with the

two, and the diamond shift becomes

obvious. Down one.

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Iraqi opposition wins British backing to oust Saddam

LONDON (AP) — Iraqi opposition groups won British support Monday for their campaign to oust Saddam Hussein and his top leaders for crimes against humanity.

"I think it is clearly obvious that crimes have been committed by the leadership," Foreign Office Minister Derek Fatchett said after a meeting with representatives of 15 opposition groups. "I think the campaign is a strong one which the international community would support."

The groups planned to meet here Tuesday with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk, who also had talks last week with Ahmad Chalabi, head of Iraqi National Congress, an opposition umbrella group. The U.S. Congress has approved a \$97 million aid package to support Iraqi dissidents.

British officials said earlier that Fatchett's meeting with the Iraqis was one of a series reflecting the greater frankness by the United States and Britain that a prime aim after ending the stalemate over U.N. weapons inspections is to topple Saddam.

"It is almost inconceivable to imagine that Iraq without Saddam Hussein would not be a better country," Fatchett said

after the meeting.

Fatchett said he had stressed to the often-competing opposition groups that events are moving quickly in Iraq, making unity vital.

Spokesmen for the Iraqi National Congress later said the member organisations were of one mind about their goals and needed a clear public commitment from Britain and the United States.

"The Iraqi opposition are very united in their objectives: the removal of Saddam Hussein and the establishment of a democratic alternative in Iraq," said Nabil Musawi.

"We asked the British government and are asking the U.S. government tomorrow, to make a clear public, political statement in support of the Iraqi opposition," Musawi said. "We don't want them to drop their commitment when things get too hot for them."

Musawi said his group believed the Western allies who fought Saddam in the 1991 Gulf war left the job "half-done" and so have a moral obligation to support the Iraqi opposition in its efforts to get rid of the dictator.

Fatchett emphasised that Britain's support would not be military, but instead to help the opposition group coordinate its

campaign, which Musawi said his group understood.

What the Iraqi National Congress seeks "is not foreign forces," Musawi said. "This is the duty of the Iraqi people."

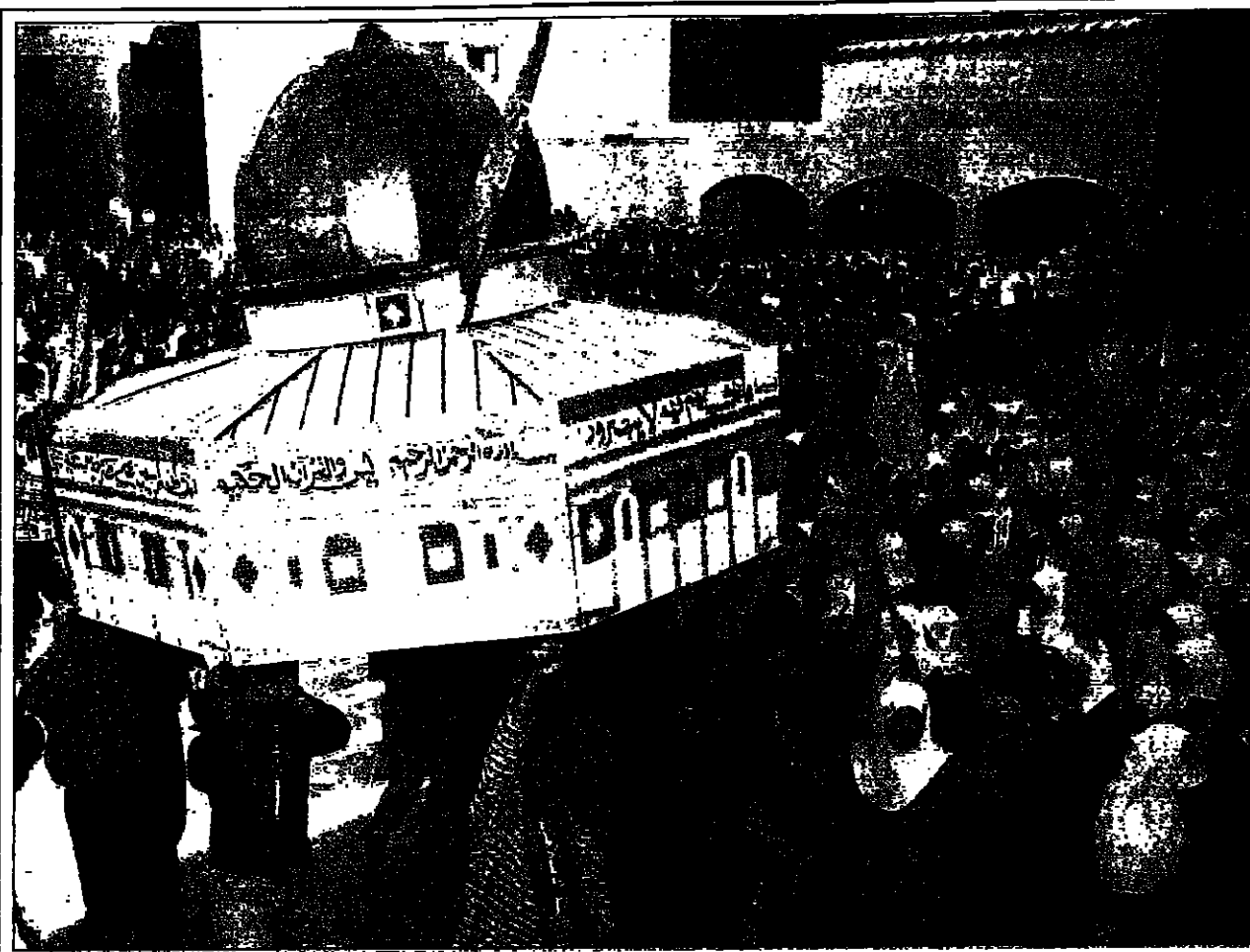
What the opposition groups want now is support for their campaign to set up a war crimes tribunal, reactivation of the opposition radio station to transmit their message to the Iraqi people, and a clear commitment to the opposition and what it stands for, he said.

Musawi's group reiterated its proposal to establish an opposition government on Iraqi territory in a "no-fly zone" to be enforced by the United States and its allies.

Hamid Al Bayati, London representative of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, said the opposition leaders urged Britain to make further efforts to protect human rights in Iraq.

In Damascus, the Iraqi Communist Party and another Syrian-based opposition group led by a former member of Saddam's Baath Party, accused Britain of interfering.

Fadel Ansari, once a senior Baath official who now leads a splinter pro-Syrian group in Damascus, said foreign intervention "strengthens the regime and does not weaken it."



Students carry huge model of the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem, which remains under Israeli occupation, during a political rally of all student factions at Al Najah University in the West Bank town of Nablus Monday (AP photo)

Turkish government set to fall

ANKARA (AFP) — The government of Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz looked Monday to be heading for collapse this week from opposition motions over the premier's alleged involvement in organised crime.

The motions have been tabled by former premier Tansu Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and her political allies, the Islamist Virtue Party (FP), who are keen to topple Yilmaz's coalition government.

Two weeks ago the People's Republican Party (CHP), on whose outside support the coalition depends for a majority in parliament, withdrew its backing from Yilmaz.

The political crisis comes amid a diplomatic one sparked by the arrival in Italy of Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the reviled Kurdish Labour Party (PKK). The Italian govern-

ment has refused to hand him over.

The prime minister has rejected the organised crime accusations and defended himself by pointing to the government's success in fighting Mafia gang influence in Turkey.

This year has seen the arrest of several key Mafia figures in France, Bulgaria and Turkey.

One of these figures, Alaatin Cakici, arrested in Bulgaria in July, and the premier's relations with a property developer, Korkmaz Yigit, are at the centre of the allegations linking Yilmaz to the Mafia.

Yigit has accused the prime minister of turning a blind eye to Mafia involvement in the privatisation of a state-owned bank.

The property developer admitted in a television broadcast that he had links to Turkish Mafia chief Alaatin

Cakici, currently in jail in France.

He said that Yilmaz and his economics minister Gunes Taner knew of this when Yigit bought the state bank TTB last July for \$600 million.

The privatisation of the bank was frozen and Yigit imprisoned as an investigation was launched into the purchase of the bank.

Yilmaz's government came to power in June last year after the resignation of Islamist premier Necmettin Erbakan who was forced out under pressure from Turkey's powerful military.

If Yilmaz loses the vote Wednesday, as seems likely, President Suleyman Demirel must appoint a new leader to try and form a government.

But the Islamist Virtue Party, which forms the largest group in parliament, is thought to be unacceptable to the country's

military leadership, which regards itself as the guardian of a secular system.

And DYP leader Ciller is similarly ruled out because of her earlier coalition with the Islamists and alleged involvement in corruption scandals of her own.

The other parties in Turkey's fragmented parliament are too small to muster a majority without Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP).

If no viable coalition can be put together within 45 days of the resignation of a government, the president can dissolve parliament and appoint an interim government to lead the country to general elections.

Early elections are already set for next spring, after parliament this summer agreed to bring them forward from the regular end of its term in the year 2000.

Adel Imam to attend Gaza airport opening

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian ministers and film star Adel Imam will be aboard the first plane to land at the Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip when the facility opens Tuesday, government newspapers here reported.

Tourism Minister Mamduh Al Baltagi, Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif and State Planning and International Cooperation Minister Zafer Al Beshri will be on the EgyptAir flight from Cairo to Gaza with Imam, Al Ahram newspaper said.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will be at the airport to greet them and "has insisted that the passengers be his guests for a night in Gaza" instead of returning to Egypt the same day, airport officials in Cairo said.

After signing an agreement Friday on starting up service at the airport, Arafat decided to open the facility Tuesday and that the first plane to land would be Egyptian.

EgyptAir and the self-rule

Palestinian Authority have not yet discussed setting up a permanent air link between Cairo and Gaza, officials at the Egyptian flag-carrier said.

Later Tuesday, Dutch, Jordanian, Moroccan, Saudi and Spanish planes will fly into Yasser Arafat international airport.

But the first outbound flight will be Arafat's when he goes to Paris Wednesday for a day that includes talks with French President Jacques Chirac.

The Palestinian airport is located in the southern Gaza Strip near the border with Egypt.

Although the facility was built nearly two years ago, Israel had refused to give the green light for it to become operational.

Under Israeli-Palestinian accords, Israeli approval was needed to start up service at the airport and the Jewish state has the right to monitor passengers and freight as it does along the foreign borders of the Palestinian autonomous zones.

17 Palestinians injured in West Bank clashes

DURA (AFP) — Fifteen Palestinian students and two Palestinian policemen were hurt on Monday in clashes with Israeli soldiers firing tear gas and rubber-coated bullets, witnesses said.

The injuries occurred when students from schools in Dura near Hebron in the south of the West Bank started throwing stones at Israeli border guards and Palestinian police intervened to separate the two sides, the witnesses said.

The injuries to the students and policemen were light and were caused by smoke inhalation and none of those injured was taken to hospital, the witnesses said.

The situation was later

described as quiet. The reason for the clashes was not immediately known.

In another development, the body of a 22-year-old Palestinian woman missing for a week was found near the settlement of Elazar south of Hebron, Palestinian sources said Monday.

A leaflet signed by the Fateh movement, founded by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, accused Israeli settlers of killing Sabah Omar Ahmad Abu Sneyneh, a student at Hebron's Islamic college.

She had been missing since November 15.

An Israeli military spokesman said he was not able to comment on the matter.

Hariri to resign today

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri will offer his resignation Tuesday after the new president, General Emile Lahoud, takes his oath of office, Tele-Liban state television said Monday.

Hariri, a Sunni Muslim billionaire who has been prime minister since 1992, is expected to be reappointed to the post.

Under the Lebanese constitution, the head of government must leave his post when the new president takes office.

Lahoud, a Maronite Christian, will be sworn in late Tuesday morning at the parliament.

At least 90 of the 128 members of parliament are expected to support Hariri's reappointment, officials said.

The country's most senior politician condemned attempts by various groups and "some media" to "alienate the people of Iran by suggesting a normalisation of relations with the United States."

"This is all meaningless, no sensible person can submit his country and his people to an oppressive power such as the United States," Khamenei

Agencies

IRAN'S SUPREME leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Monday ruled out a resumption of relations with the United States which he termed Iran's "number one enemy."

The country's most senior politician condemned attempts by various groups and "some media" to "alienate the people of Iran by suggesting a normalisation of relations with the United States."

"This is all meaningless, no sensible person can submit his country and his people to an oppressive power such as the United States," Khamenei

said in a speech to several thousand Revolutionary Guards broadcast by state radio.

"The number one enemy of the country and our people is the oppressor, that is to say the United States," he said, adding that Islam will ensure the Iranian people's salvation and the country's independence.

Iran and the United States have not had diplomatic relations since 1980 when U.S. embassy staff in Tehran were held hostage for over a year, months after a violent revolution that toppled the pro-Western imperial regime.

The United States has since accused Iran of supporting international terrorism and undermining the Middle East peace process.

Attempts at renewing a dialogue since the election in May 1997 of the moderate cleric Mohammad Khatami to the presidency have met with fierce opposition from Iranian hardliners.

Khamenei's speech came two days after a group of visiting Americans was attacked in Tehran by Islamic fundamentalists shouting anti-American slogans. Their vehicle was damaged but they were unhurt.

The attack was claimed by a radical Iranian group called the Sacrificers for Islam, Al Hayat newspaper reported Monday.

"In a telephone call to this newspaper's office in Tehran, an anonymous caller claimed responsibility in the name of the group and said several of [the Americans] had been injured," Al Hayat said.

"Supporters of the revolution and supreme leader followed the spies and found them at the Esteghal Hotel at midnight Saturday night and attacked them as they got off the bus," the caller said.

Iranian leader rules out relations with U.S.

Sanctions face steady erosion from Iraq trade

By Jack Redden
Reuters

BEIRUT — While Iraqi and U.N. officials continue their tug-of-war over arms inspections, growing trade with Iraq's neighbours shows that the sweeping trade sanctions intended to force Baghdad's compliance are steadily eroding.

Diplomats have seen Hyundai cars carried over the border from Jordan and Iraqi oil tankers appear on roads in Syria.

In the north of Iraq, long lines of Turkish trucks cross the border with Iraqi diesel. In the south, Iraqi oil flows down the Gulf disguised as Iranian production.

"After eight years there's a general loosening," said a diplomat who has watched the sanctions regime for much of the time since it was imposed after Iraqi forces were driven from Kuwait in 1991.

"There's going to be a constant erosion. There is a general sanctions fatigue and how long can this go on?" he said. "We're heading towards an end game because sanctions are getting less and less tenable."

The original sanctions, which prohibited all Iraqi exports and required United Nations approval — frequently withheld — for imports, were supposed to force Iraq to eliminate all of its weapons of mass destruction.

This was supplemented two years ago by an agreement that Iraq could export some oil under U.N. supervision to raise funds to buy food and other necessities.

But after years of patchy cooperation from Iraqi authorities, the U.N. body

supervising the arms controls says it still cannot certify banned weapons have been eliminated.

Without that clean bill of health, the United Nations will not let Iraq resume normal exports of oil, its only source of hard currency.

Oil flows out, goods pour in

Iraq's decision virtually to shut down the U.N. arms inspections — reversed in mid-November, for the moment at least, under the threat of imminent U.S. attack — seems to have galvanised Western thinking that the sanctions regime is nearing the end of its useful life.

So far the embargo has impoverished most Iraqis but done little to shake President Saddam Hussein, whose family is said to control the smuggling.

The amount of legal trade has risen sharply with the oil-for-food deal, reducing the impact of sanctions. Iraq is now authorised to export more than \$5 billion of oil in a six-month period, more than it can produce.

There has always been some smuggling. The sanctions were a blow not just to Iraq but also to neighbours who once had lucrative trade with Baghdad.

It took Jordan, under intense U.S. pressure, more than a year to tighten its border. But Washington has acquiesced in Jordan's purchase of Iraqi oil at discount rates, about \$500 million worth last year, as the indebted Kingdom has no other viable supply.

Jordan's oil imports come under a trade protocol under which its official exports to Iraq have risen from some

\$135 million in 1996 to \$200 million last year.

Among illicit items heading over the border at the one legal crossing point was a truck that a diplomat saw was carrying new Hyundai cars — now driven by Baghdad police.

The volume of Iraqi diesel flowing to Turkey, via Kurdish middlemen in the autonomous north of Iraq, has ebbed and flowed, disrupted by fighting and politics but not sanctions.

Since 1992, up to 1,500 trucks a day have carried Iraqi diesel across the border in large tanks welded beneath their frames. The flow was disrupted this month when the region hovered on the brink of a new U.S.-led attack on Iraq, but it resumes after each crisis.

Iraqi oil has also been trucked across the border into former enemy Iran, where it can disappear into the vast Iranian production. More Iraqi oil heads south along the Gulf in vessels that claim to be carrying Iranian oil.

Syria, another long-time foe which fought alongside U.S. forces in 1991, resumed trade in May 1997, 17 years after the two countries severed relations. Ramez Shallah, president of the Syrian chambers of commerce, told Reuters that Syria has done about \$100 million worth of trade with Iraq since then.

Neighbours want a piece of the action

Syria is also studying how to restore a pipeline to carry Iraqi oil to the Mediterranean, a shorter route than the current U.N.-supervised flow through

Turkey, Deputy Prime Minister Salim Yassin said.

He said he was confident of U.N. agreement.

Shallah and Yassin emphasised that Syria's rapidly growing trade with Iraq is authorised by U.N. officials, who maintain an office at the main crossing point into Iraq.

But lucrative, unauthorised trade by other countries has not gone unnoticed in Damascus. "All over the world and at all times, the harshness of the punishment will wither and decrease," Shallah said of the indefinite period of sanctions. "It's a law of nature."

Diplomats, who a year ago said Syria was rigidly following U.N. sanctions, now say they see Iraqi oil tankers on Syrian roads. Foreign newspapers have talked of a deal to smuggle Iraqi oil through northern Syria, though the only U.N.-authorised routes are through Turkey and Iraq's Gulf port of Umm Qasr.

In neighbouring Lebanon, the business community is anxious to gain a share of the trade it thinks others, regardless of sanctions, are enjoying.

Lebanon has just taken a first step towards restoring diplomatic relations with Iraq and Lebanese businessmen have been visiting Baghdad.

"Lebanon used to export 20 per cent of its turnover to Iraq."

It was a big market," Jacques Sarraf, head of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, told Reuters. "Turkey and Syria don't have agreements with Iraq but they are trading. We should at least get a piece of this cake."

Crew forsakes skipper

LONDON — The crew of a rowing boat bidding for a Transatlantic record have abandoned their crossing and their captain after an apparent mutiny. The crew of 16 men and two women jumped ship in the Cape Verde islands off the African coast after a series of disasters ranging from broken battery charges to generator problems and anger over the skipper's attitude. The skipper's father said "My son is firm — possibly firmer than most — and it seems the crew did not like that."

Smoking does not help keep weight down

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Smoking does not help young people keep their weight down. A study conducted by Robert Klesges at the University of Memphis in Tennessee found unequivocally that both long-time and recent smokers do not lose weight. But researchers found, as expected, that smokers who gave up the habit put on a lot more weight than those who stuck with the weed. "Only after decades of smoking do we see a difference in body weights of smokers and non-smokers."

Birds to help measure life quality

LONDON (R) — The British government unveiled plans to measure quality of life with such factors as the wild bird population. "The quality of life is not simply economic," Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott said. Prescott added that indicators such as housing and water quality, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic volumes, educational achievements and health should be considered. "I want these headline indicators over time to become just as useful and familiar, reported regularly on TV, radio and in the newspapers."

Referee in rift with crowds

LONDON (R) — An English referee may be in trouble after his on-field antics reportedly sparked trouble on the terraces at the weekend. Ron Noades, manager and owner of third division Brentford, said referee Ken Lynch responded to chants from the crowd by making an extravagant bow and "conducting" the crowd as it sang "Two-one to the referee."

Musicians call for freedom

COPENHAGEN (R) — Delegates at the first world conference on music and censorship levelled their appeal for the right of freedom of expression for musicians at the United Nations. "We ask for your support to bring violations of [musicians'] fundamental rights of freedom of expression to the widest possible international attention and to dedicate yourself... to the eradication of these forms of human rights abuse," they said in a final declaration.

Bob Marley life on show next year

KINGSTON (AP) — The long-delayed theme park that will showcase the life and work of reggae legend Bob Marley will open in February in Orlando, Florida, the singer's widow announced Sunday. Rita Marley said the Universal Studios project will open Feb. 6, Marley's birthday. "It's beautiful, the exact replica of the Bob Marley Museum. A grand opening is planned," she said. The park is modelled after Marley's former Kingston home, now a museum that attracts thousands of visitors.

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